**Midterm Review of the GEF funded Seychelles’ Protected Areas Finance Project**

**UNDP PIMS 4656**

**GEF ID 5485**

**Final Report**

**Dr Camille Bann**

**10 August 2018**

**Executive Summary**

**Table A: Project Information Table**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Project Title | Seychelles’ Protected Areas Finance Project  UNDP PIMS: 4656  GEF ID: 5485 |
| MTR time frame and date of MTR report | May – September 2018  Draft Report – 20 July 2018  Final Report – 10 August 2018 |
| Region and countries included in the project | Seychelles |
| GEF Operational Focal Area/Strategic Program | BD1: Improve Sustainability of Protected Area System |
| Executing Agency | UNDP |
| Implementing Partner | Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change (MECC) |
| Other project partners | SNPA, SIF, NS, ICS, MCSS, GIF, TNC |
| MTR members | Camille Bann |

The **Seychelles’ Protected Areas Finance Project** is a five-year project (2016-2020) managed by the Government of the Seychelles – United Nations Development Programme - Global Environment Facility (GOS-UNDP-GEF) Programme Coordination Unit (PCU) of the Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change (MEECC), and implemented in association with a number of conservation organizations and other stakeholders. The project has a budget of US$ 17,876,554, comprised of a GEF grant of US$ 2,776,900 and planned co-financing of US$15,099,654.

The PA Policy (2013) sets out the commitment made by the Government of Seychelles to protect at least 50% of its terrestrial area and 30% of its marine environment. In 2013, the government announced its intention to proclaim 30% of the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), 410,000 square kilometers, as protected of which 50% will be a no-take zone, in exchange for debt buy-back negotiated with the Paris Club. A marine spatial planning exercise with the support of The Nature Conservancy (TNC) started in 2014 and is on-going.

The expansion of the PA system is happening while existing sites are not even sustainably financed. Thus, there is an urgent need to determine how to increase the flow and the generation of funding into PAs, through new financial mechanisms, alongside improvements in cost, management and conversation effectiveness, both at the site and at the system level.

The project is designed to improve the financial sustainability and strategic cohesion of Seychelles protected area (PA) system, while also dealing with emerging threats and risks to biodiversity in a shifting national economic environment.

The project is organized around two outcomes (components):

* Outcome 1: Protected Area (PA) investment is fostered and the capacity for PA management, at site, institutional and systemic levels, is improved for directing the long-term sustainable financing of the PA system and generating conservation benefits.
* Outcome 2: The overall ability of the PA system to generate reliable revenue is improved, both in view of improving its overall management effectiveness and in terms of catering for the needs of an expanded estate.

**Project Progress**

Key achievements at the midterm stage include:

* **Development of Seychelles National Parks Authority (SNPA) Strategic Plan (2017-2021) and approval of SNPA financial autonomy**. The Strategic Plan presents a good example for other Ministries in Seychelles and is available on the Indian Ocean Commission website as an illustration of best practices. SNPA financial autonomy, to come into place in January 2019, is critical for the revitalization of SNPA.
* **SNPA corporate identify and branding** guidelines have been developed and are being applied to all SNPA signage and information materials, ensuring consistent messaging and building awareness of SNPA.
* The project supported the operationalization of the **Seychelles Conservation and Climate Adaptation Trust Fund** (SeyCCAT), which is utilizing funds from the 2015 Debt buy-back agreement and building the asset base to finance management and conservation of the expanded MPA system. The PAF Technical Advisor (TA) sits on the SeyCCAT Finance committee, and thus PAF is playing an on-going role in the strategic development of PA finance.

Table B presents the MTR ratings and a summary of achievement and challenges. In terms of progress toward results the project is rated as ‘Satisfactory’ across its objectives and its two outcomes. In terms of Project Implementation and adaptive management the project is rated as ‘Moderately Satisfactory’, and ‘Moderately Likely’ in terms of the project’s sustainability.

**Table B: MTR Ratings & Achievement Summary Table for PA Finance project**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Measure** | **MTR Rating** | **Achievement / Description** |
| **Project Strategy1** | N/A |  |
| **Progress Towards Results** | Objective: To improve the financial sustainability and strategic cohesion of Seychelles protected area system, which also dealing with emerging threats and risks to biodiversity in the shifting national economic environment.  Achievement Rating: Satisfactory | The mid-term target reached for indicator 1a and for 50% of sub-systems for Indicator 1b, and are on track for indicators 2 and 3, with the End of Project target reached for some indicator components.  The project is producing technically strong outputs and support. |
| Outcome 1: Component 1Protected Areas investment is fostered & capacity for PA Management, at site and systematic levels, is improved for directing the Long Term sustainable financing of PA  Achievement Rating: Satisfactory | Key achievements include the completion of a Protected Areas System and Financing and Investment Plan, support for the operationalization of SeyCCAT, training for all partners on management and business plans.  The development of Management plans and business plans have faced delays but are now largely progressing.  A decision by the project on how to quantify the contributions of PAs to the economy is required. |
| Outcome 2: The overall ability of the PA system to generate relevant revenue is improved, both in view of improving the overall management effectiveness & of catering for the needs of an expanded estate  Achievement Rating: Satisfactory | Key achievements include the SNPA Strategic Plan and financial autonomy, and steady progress across some partner sites (e.g. Aldabra House – Mahe, and Cousin Island).  Delays have been experienced across SNPA activities and by other partners (e.g. GIF) for a variety of reasons, some of which are not in the project’s control such as the approval of the Nature Reserves and Conservancy Bill. |
| **Project Implementation & Adaptive Management** | Achievement Rating: Moderately Satisfactory | Strong project team.  Areas of improvement include – Government to play more of a role in driving the project, development of Steering Committee to be more pro-active and act as a forum for exchanging knowledge and building cohesion, better oversight of co-financing and its links to work-plan, enhanced stakeholder engagement and communication. |
| **Sustainability** | Achievement Rating: Moderately Likely | Institutional risks to sustainability include - the Nature Reserves and Conservancy Bill has held the project up on a number of fronts and ineffective management of the pressures facing SNPA through its transition. |

Notes: 1/ Strategy is not rated as part of the MTR

**Conclusions and Recommendation**

The MTR considered whether it is possible to move towards a system approach to PA management in the Seychelles and if so the role of the project in creating such a system. Many partners say they want a PA system but there is limited evidence of partners working together to develop a more cohesive system, putting their personal interests aside. A finding of the midterm review is that the PAF should provide on–going support for a move towards a PA system from the perspective of PA financing, but is not designed to, and is not responsible for, developing a PA system plan. The development of a PA system is a broader, longer term endeavor requiring greater Government leadership and commitment by partners and a series of additional activities which are not in the project’s scope. The PAF project should focus on developing financing options at both the site and system level and building support for these options. It can also provide more opportunities to bring partners together to build relationships, manage conflicts and share knowledge. Furthermore, the MSP is already working on the overall PA system framework and so using PAF for this is not necessary.

The project is strategically highly relevant to Seychelles and is well nested within the larger dialogue on PA management and finance through the MSP and SeyCCAT. In additional to its work with SeyCCAT supporting the development of new financing mechanism for the expanded PA System, PAF is supporting a significant amount of work at the institutional level / site specific level focused on PAs in the Inner Islands. It is important that lessons learnt on PA Financing at these sites can be up-scaled to new areas / Outer Islands.

The business case for PAs is lacking and the quantification/ monetization of PA’s contribution to the economy is an important area of work and should be developed with the support of MEECC. This can help to inform decision and to generally raise awareness of the importance of Natural Capital / Ecosystem Services to the economy and livelihoods.

In terms of project management, the project should not pull back its support to SNPA given the demands currently facing SNPA as it transitions to financial autonomy. Strong ownership of project by SNPA is also very important going forward to ensure its success and sustainability. It is also important that the National Project Director (NPD) champions the project, and expedites the required approvals and government meetings.

The project has the potential to showcase 'best practice' in terms of PAs Finance and Business Planning in the context of SIDS and the Blue Economy. Generally, greater attention is now needed to capture the lessons learnt and disseminate them both nationally and internationally

Recommendations, the party responsible for implementing the recommendation and the timeframe within which they should be completed are summarized in Table C.

**Table C: MTR Recommendations**

| **Category** | **Specific Recommendations** | **Responsible party** | **Completion date [Timeframe]** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **1/ Revisions to Results Matrix** | * North Island and Denis Island to be removed as indicator sites, as they are not protected areas and are unlikely to be designated within the time frame of the project. This does not affect the project support under component 2 for these sites. | PM | September 2018 |
| * Indicator 9c – to be revised to reflect the best current opportunities in innovative financing for PAs. The project should realign its activities under this indicator to supporting SeyCCAT to develop their Blue Enterprise Fund and Tourism Conservation Levy. It should however continue to monitor options for PES and Biodiversity Offsets and support their development if the opportunity arises. The End of Project target can be revised to: At least 1 mechanism trailed, most likely Blue Enterprise Fund or Tourism Conservation Levy. | PM | September 2018 |
| * Glass bottom boat at SNPA sites (Activity 2.2.8) to be dropped and funds reallocated to other SNPA activities. | PM | September 2018 |
| * **Capacity Scorecards** – Measurement of progress against indicator 6 is problematic as the baseline was only established for SNPA, ICS and the PCU at project design. Furthermore, assessments by other projects (namely the Outer Islands project in November 2016, and the planned capacity assessments under the proposed Ridge to Reef (R2R) project (GEF6) indicate that an additional assessment by PAF is not needed at this stage. It is recommended that the project undertakes an assessment for ICS and SNPA, which can act as indicators for capacity building for the project (with particular emphasis on SNPA to help inform their capacity development), for the Terminal Evaluation. | PAF | In advance of the Terminal Evaluation |
| **2/ Silhouette (activity 2.2.8) -** concrete progress is required within the current quarter (July- September 2018) or funds shall be reallocated by the project. | The revised **project proposal** which satisfies the objectives of the project, adopted by the Silhouette Foundation by the end of August 2018. This should include a commitment to update the existing terrestrial management plan, recently finalized by ICS, to include the marine national park, which will enable Silhouette Island to be managed as one integrated site with associated revenue sharing arrangements. | SNPA-ICS, Silhouette  Foundation, | August 2018 |
| Detailed work plan and budget submitted and approved to the Project Steering Committee by end of September 2018. | As above | September 2018. |
| Updated integrated management plan with a fully costed implementation plan completed by December 2018. | As above | December 2018 |
| Sustainable financing plan for the integrated management of both the terrestrial and marine national parks developed and formally adopted by the Silhouette Foundation by April 2019. | As above | April 2019 |
| * MEECC to develop the regulations for Silhouette National Park (including both the marine and terrestrial national parks in an integrated regulation). | MEECC | October 2018 |
| * Progress as per the work-plan to be assessed by PAF at the end of September 2018 and again at the end of December 2018, with the view of reducing or removing the grant allocation if adequate progress has not been made | PAF | [Ongoing] |
| **3/ Decision on activity 1.2.2** – Quantification of the contribution of the PA system to the economy of Seychelles | * NPD to facilitate a decision between PAF, Government and Steering Committee on the way forward. PAF can support the TEMPA study (if approved by Government), or additional money could be allocated to support the SWIOFISH3 consultancy on ecosystem services. | NPD | October 2018 |
| 4/ **Project Management** | * PAF project manager / PCU to resolve issues around **project co-financing**: (i) determine how much support will be forthcoming over the remaining project period and how this can best support the work-plan, with a focus on partners for whom contributions are significantly below commitments at the mid term (i.e. Denis Private Island, MEEC, Nature Seychelles, SNPA) ; (ii) Work with MEECC and SeyCATT to quantify of current and future co-financing by MEECC. | PAF, MEECC, NS, SNPA, SeyCATT | October  2018 |
| * The **TA position** is scheduled to end in December 2019 – work-plans / priorities going forward need to take this into account to ensure that the TA’s time is strategically allocated, and that the work can be completed within the timeframe and /or sustained by others. | PAF | December 2018 |
| * A review of all activities in Q1 2019 should determine if there is scope in the budget (due to underspending, or under performing activities which may be curtailed) to extend the Technical Advisor position beyond December 2019, if the Steering Committee are in support of this. | PAF, SC | June 2019 |
| * All partners to detail their workplans / programmes as requested by PAF PM (e.g. provision of details on sub-activities and allocated budgets, especially where there is a deviation from the annual workplans) so that it is clear what money is being spent on. | All partners, PM | [On-going] |
| * PAF and Denis Island to arrange a first visit by PAF to see project opportunities at site level. | PAF-PM- GIF-Dennis Island | October 2018 |
|  | * **Branding**. All partners to ensure that they acknowledge GEF Funding in their promotional materials as per GEF branding guidelines. | PAF with all Partners | [Immediate and ongoing] |
| **5/ NPD / MEECC to champion project** | NPD to be responsible for the approval and adoption of the Protected Area Finance Plan, a key output for the project, through liaising with the MOF and Cabinet. | NPD | October 2018 |
| A meeting with the new Minister of Environment to present the project, MTR results and future activities is a priority | NPD | September 2018 |
| Ensure National Reserves and Conservancy Act is approved | MEECC | December 2018 |
| Ensure technical outputs by the project are adopted by Government and championed/publicized by MEECC | MEECC | [Ongoing] |
| **6/ Support for SNPA delivery**: | * + PAF and SNPA to specify the delivery mechanisms for project activities by the end of September 2018. This should clearly identify the focal point for the PAF project and leads for specific activities as appropriate | SNPA & PAF | September 2018 |
| The following quality assurance process for SNPA signage and information is recommended: (i) All printed outputs to be reviewed by the SNPA Technical Advisory Committee; (ii) Printing of all outputs being paid by the project must receive formal approval from PM and TA *before* they are printed. | SNPA, SNPA Technical Advisory Committee, PAF | [Ongoing] |
| * + It is recommended that a manager is hired using SNPA’s allocated grant funding to ensure the timely delivery of SNPA project activities under component 2. This is based on the view that SNPA are not currently resourced to manage the activities in-house, and further delays have cost implications and increase the risk of activities not being finalized within the project timeframe to the required level of quality. The appointed person should work with the new SNPA maintenance officer to help build their capacity, but should not be involved in SNPA activities not funded by the PAF. | SNPA & PAF | Urgent. End of October 2018 at the latest |
| * + PAF to fund a legal and institutional expert to support SNPA in its negotiations with the Government regarding its transition to an autonomous body in January 2019. SNPA does not have a legal officer and it urgently needs legal advice. | PAF | Urgent. End of September 2018 at the latest |
| * + PAF to present regularly to the SNPA board, which meets every 2 months, to facilitate discussions on issues to be resolved by the project and their timely resolution. PAF Quarterly Progress reports to be brought to the attention of SNPA Board if activities not are on track, or in advance of such reports if needed. | PAF & SNPA | On-going – End of project |
| * + SNPA to develop a plan for increasing its human resource capacity, and to consider hiring staff on a contract basis in the near team to attract the right candidates for senior and mid-manager positions. | SNPA | December 2018 |
| **7/ PAF to focus on supporting development of a PA System through its development of PA sustainable financing mechanisms** | * PAF to facilitate sharing of results between partners, and discussions on how their activities [supported by project] can contribute to financing PA system | PAF | [On-going ] |
| * PAF to continue to work with SeyCCAT to help build its asset base and address funding gaps and system level financing solutions, and with MSP, e.g. through support on the costing of the MSP | PAF - SeyCATT | [Ongoing] |
| 8/ **Building cohesion between project partners** | * PAF training to continue to be used as a mechanism to bring parties together. | PAF - Partners | On-going |
| * Steering Committee Meetings can be restructured to allow a session each meeting on a specific theme/topic of common interest to PAs | SC | [On-going] |
| * The SNPA Marketing and Communication Strategy and related training (for all partners) should be seen by all partners as an opportunity to work together and develop common marketing materials. | PAF - Partners | December 2018 |
| **9/ Build closer working relationship with ETF** | * PAF to meet regularly with ETF and SeyCCAT to keep each other abreast of their funding proposals to maximize effectiveness of funding and avoid duplication. | PAF-ETF-SeyCATT | [Ongoing] |
| * ETF to be invited to join PAF SC | SC | To be decided at next SC |
| **10/ Communications / Knowledge sharing.** | * PAF to document **lessons learnt** from the implementation of project activities, with clear guidance on how piloted activities may be up-scaled to other sites / Outer Islands. These lessons could be developed together with OI Project, to demonstrate linkages, for example in relation to the business plans being developed under the OI project. | PAF-TA, with support from partners | December 2019 |
| * For each finance mechanism piloted or under design/consideration by the project an overview **policy note** (or alternative dissemination document) should be developed that sets out the main features of the mechanism, their strengths and weaknesses, lessons learnt, where and how it can be applied in the Seychelles (e.g. site or system level or both) and conditions required for the mechanism to be successfully implemented. This should be done in close collaboration with the NPD and shared with the MOF. | PAF-TA, with support of project partners | December 2019 |
| * A **compendium of PA financing mechanisms** applicable to Seychelles with links to technical documents and best practices globally may also be developed. This information may also be used to update the Protected Area Finance Plan towards the end of the project. The compendium could be linked to a national PA financing **knowledge database** which potentially could be developed and made accessible to different stakeholder groups to support decision-making and consistent adoption of best practice. Ideally this database would be updated and maintained post the project, if a suitable host could be identified. | PAF-TA, with support from partners | December 2019 |
| * PCU and UNDP to agree if the database of terrestrial and marine Business Plans from around the world, already collated by the PAF and currently available in a dropbox, could be hosted on the BesNET or Conservation Finance Alliance website to increase their visibility. | PAF, RTA | December 2018 |
| * **Dissemination**: Photo essays and easily digestible and readable articles in multiple languages would help to disseminate and publicize project messages and achievements, nationally and internationally, in the public eye and within the international development community. Increased use of social/mass media can be considered to enhance visibility. The opportunity exists to engage with experienced journalists/communications experts at UNDP HQ to develop a suite of products. | PAF | [Ongoing] |
| **11/ Strengthen partnerships with the Minister of Tourism.** | * PAF to aim to develop a closer working relationship with the MOT to derive mutually beneficial PA tourism initiatives. Development of tourism in PAs helps to meet an objective of the Minister of Tourism to diversify the tourism offering in Seychelles and of PAF to increase PA tourism related revenues which can then be reinvested into conservation. The fact that the Minister of Tourism, as the previous Minister MEECC, is familiar with the project, supports this partnership. | PAF - MOT | September 2018 and on-going |
| **12/Enhanced engagement with the private sector** | * In particular, the tourism sector (i.e. island resorts and local businesses), whose collaboration on PA financing (in terms of financial contributions and marketing of PAs) is expected to become more important as the PA system expands. This includes continuing to work with SNPA on hotel contributions and exploring new opportunities to work with the private sector (perhaps in collaboration with the MOT). | PAF | On-going to end of project |

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# Introduction

## Purpose of MTR and objectives

The objective of the Mid Term Review (MTR) is to assess:

* progress towards the achievement of the project’s objectives and outcomes, as specified in the Project Document;
* early signs of project success or failure with the goal of identifying the necessary changes to be made in order to set the project on-track to achieve its intended results; and,
* the project’s strategy and risks to its sustainability.

In line with the United Nations Development Programme - Global Environment Facility (UNDP-GEF) Guidance on MTRs, the MTR of the Seychelles’ Protected Areas Finance (PAF) project has been initiated before the submission of the second Project Implementation Report (PIR).

**Project background**

The **Seychelles’ Protected Areas Finance Project** (PIMS 4656) is a five year project (2016-2020) which started on the 3 March 2016 and is now in its *third* year of implementation. The project is managed by the Government of the Seychelles – United Nations Development Programme - Global Environment Facility (GOS-UNDP-GEF) Programme Coordination Unit (PCU) of the Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change (MEECC), and implemented in association with a number of conservation organizations and other stakeholders.

The project has a budget of US$ 17,876,554, comprising a GEF grant of US$ 2,776,900 and planned co-financing of US$15,099,654.

The project is designed to improve the financial sustainability and strategic cohesion of Seychelles protected area (PA) system, while also dealing with emerging threats and risks to biodiversity in a shifting national economic environment.

At the time of project design Seychelles’ PA system consisted of 25 PAs (terrestrial, marine and combined) totaling 55,769 ha. Since then, under the Marine Spatial Plan (MSP) Initiative[[1]](#footnote-1), (Phase 1) two new Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) covering just over 200,000 square kilometres or 16 percent of Seychelles Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) have been designated**[[2]](#footnote-2).** Two further phases of zoning, concentrating on both shallower inshore or ‘territorial sea' waters and remaining deep ocean areas, are due to be completed by the end of 2020.

The expansion of the PA system creates the potential for improved protection of the Seychelles’ biodiversity, however the financial implications of the expansion and the needs for sustainable management of the existing and expanded system had not been properly considered (PIR, 2017). In 2014, the annual financing gap needed to achieve even basic management of the PA system (i.e. the then designated 55,769 ha) was estimated at $1.6M. For optimal management the gap was estimated at $5 million.

Furthermore, management of the PA system is split between several different entities, with individual sites being managed independently of one another. The management of most sites remains sub-optimal.

## Scope and Methodology

The MTR was undertaken over the period May–September 2018 by an independent international consultant, contracted for 26 days.

The MTR assess project progress against the following four main categories: (i) project strategy; (ii) progress towards results; (iii) project implementation and adaptive management; and, (iv) sustainability. It is based on a review key documents and extensive stakeholder consultation.

Annex 2 presents the Mid Term Review Evaluation matrix, which sets out the evaluation questions, indicators, sources and methodology.

Documents reviewed are listed in Annex 2 and include:

* The project preparation documents (i.e. PIF, UNDP Environmental & Social Screening results and the Project Document).
* Project reports including Project Inception Report, Project Implementation Report 2017 (PIRs), Quarterly progress reports and work plans, Strategies and technical reports produced by the project, Audit reports, METTs, Financial Sustainability Scorecard, Financial and Administration guidelines used by Project Team, Project operational guidelines, manuals and systems, UNDP country/countries programme document(s), and minutes of the Project Steering Committee Meetings.
* Relevant national strategic and legal documents.

The inception report completed prior to the MTR mission identified the following specific questions to be addressed as part of the MTR:

* Clarify changes to the project as set out in the Project Document and links between progress reports, work plans and how activities/outputs relate to the 9 indicators specified in the Progress Towards the Results Matrix.
* Implementation of some activities has not yet started (e.g. Activity 2.2.8 glass bottom boat feasibility study of tourism concession options for all SNPA PAs, Activity 2.2.9 Co-management of Silhouette). The MTR will determine whether these activities, which were proposed in the Project Document, are still appropriate, and if not, if funds could be better allocated to alternative activities.
* Development of a coherent PA system is an objective of the project. Is it feasible for the PA institutions to operate as ‘one system’ what are the barriers / solutions / alternatives to this?
* What evidence is there of successful partnerships building across the Government, CSOs and private sector and how has this been facilitated by the project?
* How can the project demonstrate that it has built on previous GEF investments, in particular (PIMs 4190) Strengthening Seychelles’ protected area system through NGO management modalities.
* What work has been done / is proposed on creating the legislative and policy framework related to biodiversity offsets, payment for ecosystem services, public private partnership that emphasizes the critical role of partnerships between governments, civil society and the private sector. Linked to activity 1.3.3 Assess and develop the legal and regulatory framework for PES and impact mitigation / biodiversity offsetting in the context of Seychelles.
* Clarify synergies and ways of working with BIOFIN.
* Assessments of potential increased funding from improvements to existing financing mechanisms and technical / political feasibility of proposed new financing mechanism and timeframe for their implementation.
* Quality of technical reports (such as WTP studies) and uptake by decision makers
* Role of SeyCATT in PA financing.
* How the project aligns or could be more closely aligned with the wider Marine Spatial Planning process in the country.
* What are the impacts and key innovation highlights of the project so far? How can the results and lessons of the project and technical best practice be more effectively communicated and shared at national and international level.

The MTR has sought to follow a collaborative and participatory approach engaging closely with the Project Team, government counterparts (e.g. the National Project Director (PS Environment)), the UNDP Country Office, UNDP-GEF Regional Technical Adviser, and other key stakeholders.

A mission was undertaken from the 18 – 28 June 2018 during which time face to face interviews were held with virtually all project partners and other key stakeholders engaged in related initiatives in the Seychelles. These verbal discussions were cross referenced with the available documentation and differences in opinion have be recorded where relevant. The agenda for the mission is presented in Annex 7. It included a one day field visit to Curieuse Marine National Park. A half day validation workshop was held on Wednesday 27 June to present and solicit feedback on the draft / preliminary findings of the MTR as well as generate additional views on key and / or outstanding aspects of the MTR. The workshop agenda and list of participants are presented in Annex 7. The draft report was also made available to stakeholder for their review.

## Structure of MTR Report

The rest of this report is organized as follows: Section 2 sets out the context to the study and describes the project; Section 4 presents key findings of the MTR according to the four main categories under review – namely project strategy, progress towards results, project implementation and project management and sustainability; Section 5 present conclusions and recommendations.

# Project Description and Background Context

## Background context

The territory of the Republic of Seychelles in the Western Indian Ocean consists of a landmass of 455 square kilometers (km2) forming 115 islands, and an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) covering 1.374 million km2. The archipelago is divided into two groups: the mostly granitic islands (or ‘Inner Islands’) within the Mahé Plateau, and the outer coralline islands (or ‘Outer Islands’), surrounded by a vast seascape southwest from the Plateau.

Seychelles is located in the Madagascar and the Indian Ocean Islands Region, which has been classified as a global biodiversity hotspot. Seychelles harbors two UNESCO World Heritage Sites (Aldabra Atoll and the Vallée de Mai Nature Reserve) and three Ramsar wetland sites (Mare aux Cochons High Altitude Freshwater Wetlands, Port Launay Coastal Wetlands and Aldabra Atoll). The unique biodiversity of Seychelles has developed largely because of its long geological isolation, allowing evolution to follow its own course separate from the continents.

Seychelles has the highest Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita in Africa ($15,410 in 2016).[[3]](#footnote-3) Since the early 1990s, Seychelles has transformed its economy from being mostly agrarian (based on cinnamon and copra plantations) to becoming chiefly dependent on high-end tourism and fishing (mainly tuna exports). However, increasingly the effects of climate change are placing its economy at risk. With the strengthening of the economy Official Development Assistance (ODA) flows have fallen by more than 90%, placing a higher financial burden on the Government’s budget and increasing its need to borrow commercially.

The economy of Seychelles is largely based on its natural capital – that is its marine, coastal and forest ecosystems and the ecosystem services that flow from these ecosystems including fish, tourism opportunities, water provision and protection from natural hazards. **Tourism** is the country’s most important economic sector. It provides more than 70% of hard currency earnings and employs about 30% of the labor force. Tourism and associated services currently accounts for more than half of GDP. Much of the tourism industry in Seychelles is strategically focused on high-end tourism and centered around its beaches and dive opportunities. The **fisheries sector** is critically important for assuring food security and for generating local employment. Fish catches are valued at around US$ 35 million per year, representing less than 10% of GDP, but account for more than 90% of exports. The country lies at the center of the western Indian Ocean tuna migratory routes (Project Document).

While the value of the countries natural capital / ecosystem services found in its PAs is yet to be systematically quantified and monetized, it is clear that these areas are the main repository of Seychelles’ natural capital and biodiversity and that their loss or degradation will adversely affect key sectors of the economy and local livelihoods.

The PA Policy (2013) sets out the commitment made by the Government of Seychelles to protect at least 50% of its terrestrial area and 30% of its marine environment[[4]](#footnote-4). This commitment was given by the President of the Republic of Seychelles at the Rio+20 conference[[5]](#footnote-5) in June 2012.In 2013, the government announced its intention to proclaim 30% of the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) - a further 410,000 km2 - as protected of which 50% will be a no-take zone, in exchange for debt buy-back negotiated with the Paris Club. A marine spatial planning exercise with the support of The Nature Conservancy (TNC) started in 2014 and is on-going.

The expansion of the PA system is happening while the financing of existing sites is not even on a sustainable footing. Thus, there is an urgent need to determine how to increase the flow and the generation of funding into PAs, through new financial mechanisms, alongside improvements in cost, management and conversation effectiveness, both at the site and at the system level.

## Project description

**The objective of the project** is: to improve the financial sustainability and strategic cohesion of Seychelles protected area system, while also dealing with emerging threats and risks to biodiversity in a shifting national economic environment

The project is organized around two outcomes(components):

* Outcome 1: Protected Area (PA) investment is fostered and capacity for PA management, at site, institutional and systemic levels, is improved for directing the long-term sustainable financing of the PA system and generating conservation benefits. This component is focused on enabling the planning and legal framework for an improved use of existing and new PA finance. It is designed to support the Government of Seychelles (GOS), Seychelles National Parks Authority (SNPA) and other entities managing PAs in evaluating the financial performance of the Protected Area System (PAS), determining financial gaps and identifying opportunities for improving overall functionality of both the current and the proposed expanded PA estate. This component includes the development of a national **PA system Investment Plan** and **site-level PA Financing Plans**.
* Outcome 2: The overall ability of the PA system to generate reliable revenue is improved, both in view of improving its overall management effectiveness and in terms of catering for the needs of an expanded estate. This component is focused on increasing and securing revenue generation for PA management. The project aims to improve the financial sustainability of the PA system and the individual PAs to ensure that they have adequate financial resources to cover the full costs of managing their sites at an optimal level. Many activities under component 2 are focused on making sites more attractive by renovating and building infrastructure in order to attract more visitors and justify increases in fees. Revenue generation capacity is also to be enhanced through the introduction of new cost-effective practices, systems and schemes.

**Project Implementation Arrangements[[6]](#footnote-6)**

As set out in the Project Document, the project is implemented by the MEECC, in line with the Standard Basic Assistance Agreement (SBAA) between the UNDP and the Government of Seychelles (GoS). The MEECC has the overall responsibility for achieving the project goal and objectives and is directly responsible for creating the enabling conditions for implementation of all project activities. A senior MEECC official acts as the **National Project Director (NPD)** who is responsible for providing the strategic oversight and guidance to project implementation.

The **UNDP Country Office** monitors the implementation of the project, reviews progress in the realization of the project outputs, and ensures the proper use of UNDP/GEF funds. Working in close cooperation with MEECC and SNPA, the UNDP Country Office (CO) provides support services to the project - including procurement, contracting of service providers, human resources management and financial services - in accordance with the relevant UNDP Rules and Procedures and Results-Based Management (RBM) guidelines. Specifically, the UNDP CO is responsible for: (i) providing financial and audit services to the project; (ii) recruitment and contracting of project staff; (iii) overseeing financial expenditures against project budgets; (iv) appointment of independent financial auditors and evaluators; and (v) ensuring that all activities, including procurement and financial services, are carried out in strict compliance with UNDP and GEF procedures. Strategic oversight is provided by the UNDP-GEF Regional Technical Advisor (RTA) responsible for the project.

A centralized **Programme Coordination Unit (PCU)** has been established by UNDP and MEECC to oversee, support, administer and coordinate the implementation of all GOS-UNDP-GEF environment and energy projects in Seychelles[[7]](#footnote-7). The PCU currently comprises an *interim* Programme Coordinator, Project Managers for the GOS-UNDP-GEF projects under implementation and financial and administrative support staff.

The day-to-day administration of the project is carried out by a **National Project Manager (NPM),** on behalf of MEECC. The NPM’s prime responsibility is to ensure that the project produces the results specified in the project document, to the required standard and within the specified constraints of time and cost. The NPM is responsible for preparing Annual Work Plans (AWP) in advance of each successive year and submitting them to the **Project Steering Committee (**PSC) for approval. The NPM is tasked with liaising and working with all partner institutions to link the project with complementary national programs and initiatives. The NPM reports to the PCU’s Programme Coordinator and is accountable to the National Project Director. The NPM is supported by a full time Technical Advisor.

Project implementation is overseen by a **Project Steering Committee (PSC).**

The project is being implemented through UNDP National Implementation Modality (NIM) and Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfer (HACT) procedures.

The PA involves a large number of stakeholders, such as i) governmental institutions and affiliates, ii) key players in the tourism sector, iii) technical, professionals, academic and/or scientific institutes, and iv) partners from the civil society. All these stakeholders were consulted from November 2014 to April 2015 during project design.

The project partners are: the Department of Environment (DOE); Seychelles National Park Authority (SNPA); Seychelles Islands Foundation (SIF); the Island Conservation Society; Nature Seychelles (NS); the Green Islands Foundation (GIF), Marine Conservation Society Seychelles (MCSS); and The Nature Conservancy (TNC).

# Findings

## Project Strategy

### Project design

The project remains of high strategic relevance given: (i) the current on-going process to expand the PA system, and the need to generate new finances to address the financing gap facing both existing and new PAs; and, (ii) that the sustainable management of the Seychelles’ biodiversity and natural capital, much of which is found in its PA system, is vital to the economy and well-being in Seychelles as discussed above. A government official described the project to be of ‘*perfect timing’.* The project represents a new area of focus in PA management in Seychelles and has facilitated discussion on a range of potential sustainable financing mechanisms and introduced and supported the development of business plans.

The project aligns with the Government’s strong commitment to PAs, demonstrated through recent decisions to significantly expand the PA network, high level Government support from the President[[8]](#footnote-8) and the recent approval of the Blue Economy Road Map[[9]](#footnote-9). However, a number of delays in approving key project outputs, setting up meetings and investment activities points to the need for the Government to play a stronger role in driving the project going forward.

The project concept is in line with the national sector development priorities and plans and can support the implementation of a number of key national policy frameworks such as: the Seychelles Sustainable Development Strategy 2012-2020 (SSDS), the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan - 2 (NBSAP), the PA Policy, the Blue Economy and the Public Finance Management Act (Project Document).

PAF also builds on past GEF investments (e.g. the NGO PIMs 4190 ‘Strengthening Seychelles’ protected area system through NGO management modalities’) and compliments current GEF projects and other key initiatives (e.g. UNDP-GEF ‘Expansion of Protected Areas in Outer Island’ referred to in the rest of this report as the ‘Outer Islands project’, The Seychelles Conservation and Climate Adaptation Trust Fund (SeyCCAT) and the MSP initiative). Furthermore, the project is aligned (specifically through Component 2) with the focus on nature-based tourism set out under the new GEF7 programming directions, demonstrating PAF’s innovative and leadership potential.

The situation has however shifted since the project was designed, which has implications for how the project should position itself going forward. While two key initiatives – MSP and SeyCATT, are taken into consideration in the Project Document, they had not yet started when the project was designed. Component 2 of the project in particular has a focus on the Inner Islands and the PA system in place at the time of project design, which covers 55,769 ha. The key question now is how to finance the expanded PA system. The expanded system will greatly increase the number of protected areas in the Outer Islands which are remote and involve more partners including private island owners, conservation organizations and the private sector involved in marine activities (e.g. fisher and charter associations).

It is important therefore that going forward the project delivers on both the work underway at its core Inner Island sites, while working with MSP, SeyCATT and project partners to understand (a) how the work at the PAF sites can be up-scaled; (b) how the solutions developed for the Inner Island be applied to the Outer Islands; and (c) what new financing mechanisms can be developed to address financing of a PA system, rather than specific sites. This is not a digression from project design, for example support for SeyCCAT is a project output (output 2.3), but rather a reflection on the importance on this element of the work for the remainder of the Project Area Finance (PAF) project.

**Systems Approach**

A system of PAs can be defined as a body of sites which function as storehouses of biodiversity and that *collectively* fulfil their role in conserving biodiversity from the point of view of participation, ecological representation and effective management[[10]](#footnote-10). Sustainable PA finance is the means to this end.

PAs in the Seychelles are currently *not* managed holistically as a system with the objective of optimizing their total value, but rather as separate sites by a range of entities with diverse interests and management modalities. According to the Project Document the current assemblage of PAs has come about over the last 40 years with an initial focus on tourism opportunities. There are important gaps in the economic, regulatory and accountability frameworks at the system level. For example, there are no system-wide parameters for determining the optimal use of conservation funds. The lack of centralized management and of cross financing of PAs has resulted in significant discrepancies between individual PAs and sub-systems. Some sites are neglected, while others are flourishing.[[11]](#footnote-11) Possible implications are that key sites for biodiversity, which may be remote and unsuitable for tourism on conservation grounds and/or access reasons, may face significant underfunding, while other sites receive significant revenue from tourism but play no role in rare species conservation.

There are various references in the Project Document on the development of a **Systems Approach.** For example:

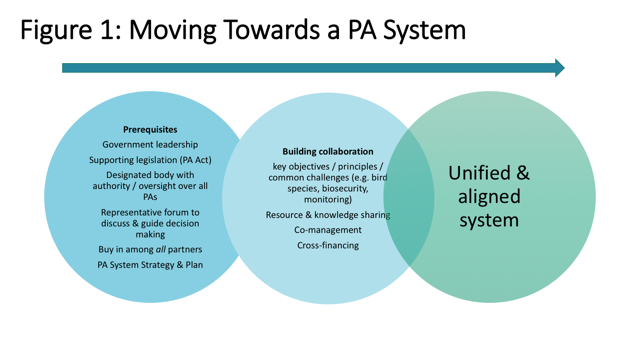
‘The project seeks to put in place a consolidated framework for the financial, operational efficiency and coherency of the current disconnected assemblage of PAs, *designing an integrated new National System of Protected Area*, with aligned management standards and efficiencies across its constituent PAs, to ensure sustainable financing in the short- and medium-term, and to provide the basis for the expansion of Seychelles protected area estate in the future’….‘This is to be achieved through two complementary streams of action: improving the generation of PA finance through a suite of mechanisms (Component 2), and improving the delivery of conservation benefits through a more effective use of this finance *at the systems level* (Component 1)’.

‘The project will facilitate the preparation of an overarching national planning framework for protected areas that will seek to ensure that a balance is maintained between the conservation of the biodiversity and heritage values of parks, the protection of native plants and animals in parks, and the rights of the public to access and enjoy parks.’

A couple of partners expressed the view that the project should be developing a plan for a PA system. Others feel that a PA system is not currently possible due to the lack of support for it and vested interests. Regardless of the range of viewpoints on its feasibility, it is clear that the prerequisites for setting up such a system are not in place. In fact, a PA system has been under discussion for many years, with no real progress. Fundamentally, it requires strong leadership from Government, and genuine commitment from all partners that they wish to work in a systematic way, rather than being focused on their own sites. Trust also needs to be built between entities. Development of a PA System is a process as set out in Figure 1. At present none of the pre-requisite are in place – namely a PA System Strategy and Plan, buy in among all partners, a representative forum to discuss and guide decision making, a designated body with authority /oversight over PAs, supporting legislation and strong Government leadership.

A suggestion is that the **National Committee** under the Nature Reserves and Conservancy Bill (yet to be approved) could serve as a representative forum for discussion. However, as currently structured this committee will have three PA members and is therefore not wholly representative (unless others accepted the 3 representatives to speak for everyone at such meetings). Furthermore, its main remit is understood to be to advise the Minster of Environment, rather than to make collective and binding decisions on the PA system as a whole.

There is also the misconception that the previous GEF-NGO project had successfully laid the foundation for a PA system on which this PAF project would then build. However, this is not the case. The GEF-NGO project help deliver the PA Policy and Nature Reserves and Conservancy Bill, but made little head way in terms of setting up a forum for sharing knowledge and there is no PA System Plan.



Notwithstanding the ambitions set out in the text of the Project Document, the project’s outputs, activities and results matrix concur with a focus on PA financing (at the site and systems level). There is no specific activity to develop the overall PA system and the project is not being measured on this. Furthermore, Component 2 is focused on individual partner organizations not on moving to a PA system through promoting collaboration between partners (although Silhouette presents an opportunity for this as discussed below). Component 2 on the whole reflects a request by Partners for institutional, not system level finance. There is therefore a mismatch between the ambitions expressed through the narrative on a systems approach in the Project Document and the project’s specific activities, which do not reflect this.

There is also a process to building trust and collaboration, which is unlikely to be initially achieved on financial aspect, which tend to be highly sensitive. There are softer ways in which partners can come together immediately to better understand each others needs and to start to explore how they can work together on a variety of PA issues, such as the key objectives and principles of a system approach and common challenges (e.g. conservation of key species, monitoring and biosecurity). Many organisations have specific knowledge which can be more formally shared. For example, MCSS have expertise in the use of drones, which can be used for high resolution habitat mapping, trend analysis and monitoring. SNPA are interested in exploring the use of drones for monitoring. SIF has already introduced electronic ticketing at Valle de Mai and have collaborated with SNPA sharing experiences and recommending the same developer for the SNPA system. Cross-financing is difficult to envisage with the current level of trust and collaboration (although some cross subsidisation within sub-system already occurs).

It is also worth considering what the role of the Government is in terms of PA finance. The Government does not appear to support providing a basic level of financial support to all PAs (including NGOs), although a counter view to this is that this could help to build trust and may incentivize NGOs and private partners to agree to financial cross subsidisation. It would also provide the Government leverage to request information to better manage the PA system.

As a SIDS manpower is limited in Seychelles and there is a small and insufficient pool of people working on PAs, therefore partnership building is critical as the system expands.

On a positive note, there are big changes afoot through the MSP, which potentially offers a suitable vehicle for promoting a PA system. The MSP is a high level process under which a new PA governance structure and national level enforcement system are under discussion – key components of a PA System.

A functioning PA system is not something the PAF can achieve in the next two and a half years (even if it were strictly designed to do so), given that the prerequisites for setting up a PA system are not in place. ***Critically, the project’s central theme is sustainable PA finance, and this is where its value added and focus should be maintained***.

PAF is however contributing to a PA systems approach in the following ways:

* A national PA System Financing and Investment Plan has been finalized.
* The project has built dialogue and opportunities for partners to meet over common issues.
  + PA training has been inclusive - Management Plans, Business plans, Enforcement training at the Seychelles Police Academy and Marketing and Communications (*forthcoming*)
  + The Steering Committee has facilitated some good discussions and sharing of views & knowledge, e.g. on drones.
* Support to SNPA
  + Development of SNPA should help facilitate a move to a PA system, by enhancing the performance of the main Government entity managing PAs.
* It supported the operationalization of Seychelles Conservation and Climate Adaptation Trust (SeyCCAT)[[12]](#footnote-12), key to the long term financing of the expanded PA system
* The project is looking closely at what may be classified as more site level financing mechanism such as entrance fee, but is also closely involved in discussion to develop mechanisms that would be more appropriate at a system scale – namely Blue Bonds, Blue enterprise funds and Tourism levy, in collaboration with SeyCCAT.

**Gender issues** were considered in the project design. The Project Document notes that the participation rate of women in the labor market of the Seychelles is 50%, however women make up the majority of unemployed (55%) and the average monthly gross salary for men is 11% higher than that of women. A number of mechanisms through which the project could achieve gender mainstreaming were identified including assessing the financial impacts of the project on men and women and addressing any differences, and assessing how the entrepreneurial potential of women matches the needs for parks development. A view was expressed that it may be difficult to asses such impacts within the project timeframe.

The project has not carried out a gender analysis as part of PIR, 2017. This could be done for key activities for the Terminal Evaluation. However, the PIR 2017 notes that the project Steering Committee is 56% women and that the project has actively sought the involvement of women in training opportunities and consultative workshops[[13]](#footnote-13). At the time of the mid-term review ~~75%~~ of staff hired either directly by the project or indirectly through project financing are women. Additionally, among the project implementing partners, women comprise 40% of CEOs and a higher proportion of management level.

### Results framework / Logframe

Tables 1 and 2 set out how the project objectives and activities, outputs and outcomes relate to the indicators by which the project results are measured. Key points related to the results framework are discussed below.

**Table 1: Project objective and relate indicators**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Objective** | **Indicators** |
| **Objective:** To improve the financial sustainability and strategic cohesion of Seychelles protected area system, while also dealing with emerging threats and risks to biodiversity in a shifting national economic environment. | **Indicator: 1**  Evolution in key scores from the **Financial sustainability scorecard** for national system of protected areas |
| **Indicator 2:**  Absolute and relative annual financing gap for the entire PAS (using the six main PA sub-systems as a proxy): |
| **Indicator 3:**  Evolution in **METT Scores** for indicator sites reflect improvements in conservation security in terrestrial and marine ecosystems: |

**Table 2: Project Outputs – Outcomes and related indicators**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Activities** | **Outputs** | **Outcomes**  **(components)** | **Indicator** |
|  | 1.1/ PA System Financing & Management adopted + subsidiary Investment plans adopted  1.2./ Site level cost-effectiveness benchmarks established to guide decision on investment, co-management &*cross subsidization*  1.3/ *An adequate legal framework is in place for implementing the PAS wide investment program with multi-funding approach* | Component 1: Protected Areas Investment is fostered & capacity for PA management, at site and Systematic levels, is improved for directing the LT sustainable financing of PA | Indicator 4: Total finances increase by 50%, based on 6 sub-systems  Indicator 5a. PAS Financing & Investment Plan approved by Government and under implementation  Indicator 5b. 4 PA Investment plans actively implemented (sites, sub-system, system level). |
|  | 1.4/ Institutional capacity building of SNPA & other key management entities for implementation of Seychelles PA System Financing | Indicator 6: Capacity Development scorecards 70% by the end of the project |
|  | 2.1. Institutional policy barriers for an effective site-level generation, **collection & retention** into PA systems are lifted, creating better **incentives** for reducing the PA finance gap | Component 2: The overall ability of the PA system to generate relevant revenue is improved, both in view of improving the overall management effectiveness & of catering for the needs of an expanded estate | Indicator 7. 100% of PA generated revenue retained in PA system  Indicator 8. Target a/ SNPA reaches [more] financial autonomy.  Target b. At least 50% of SNPA’s site- generated revenue retained |
|  | 2.2/ Tourist & other infrastructure developed,& new cost effective schemes implemented. To improve visitor numbers & and own revenue generation capacity | [*Indirectly* captured through METTs and financial scorecard – Indicators 1,2,3 and 4] |
|  | 2.3/ Operationalization of planned and possibly innovative funding mechanisms (e.g. SeyCCAT) makes clear provisions for biodiversity provisions, **in particular to address the PAS financing gap** | **Indicator 9a**: *Current domestic revenue sources* maintained – 1/ existing environment & conservation budgets are enough to cover the gap for state run sub-system; 2/ Government levies; 3/ *park entry fees & SNPA fees will be fully retained*; 4/ Public private finance mechanisms; 5/ Forms of cross-subsidization.  **Indicator 9b**: International re  venue sources. The SeyCCAT is fully operational & disbursing  **Indicator 9c**: Innovative finance (PES – water and/or flood & sediment control, Carbon credits, Biodiversity Offsets, Hydropower potential) – at least 1 trail |

The project’s results framework places a lot of weight on the Financial Score Cards, on which 3 indicators are based and the Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) (indicator 4). A number of issues were noted, as summarized below, with the METTs and Financial Scorecards, however, it is not recommended to change these, as this would affect how progress was measured relative to the baseline, and global comparisons.

* METTs
  + Some sites have been doing METTs for over 10 years but they are usually done by different people, who assess things differently so the score changes.
  + The fact that there are no indigenous communities in Seychelles deflates the score, as this is scored as zero even though it is inapplicable. Ideally this would be removed. This has implications for global comparisons.
  + METTs are being undertaken for 19 sites, although only 9 of these are being used as indicator sites
* Financial scorecards
  + Some scores for sub-systems are low because they reflect the average score across the system’s individual sites, which does not provide a good reflection of the system. For example, at the site level a Trust Fund may not be in place, but there is the SeyCCAT at the system level.

The fact that the PAF financial scorecards are developed for sub-systems further reinforcing the focus of PA Authorities on their own sites rather than the system as a whole.

Ideally the Financial scorecards would be completed for the system as a whole, but this is not compatible with the indicators set for the project.

**Removal of North and Denis as indicator (indicators 1a, 1b, 2, 3, 4).** The project was designed on the expectation that two sites – North and Denis, would be designated as PAs in the near term. This has not happened due to the delays in finalizing the **Nature Reserves and Conservancy Bill**, and the reluctance of these Islands to push forward with nomination while uncertainties remain over the precise terms of the Bill. Furthermore, an **Island Select Committee** has been established by the National Assembly, to visit all islands and assess them in terms of conservation and development. Denis and North (and other islands) are yet to be visited by the Island Select Committee. It will then be necessary to wait for the Committee’s report before any decision is made on designation. It therefore seems unlikely that these sites will be nominated in the lifetime of the project. The METT and Financial Score Cards are both designed to be applied to PAs. The inclusion of North and Denis as indicator sites is therefore inappropriate since they are not PAs and their scores are inevitably low due to this. The removal of North and Denis as indicator sites still leaves 7 indicator sites, and does not affect the baselines set for the remaining 7 indicator sites.

**Output 1.3** - An adequate legal framework is in place for implementing the PAS wide investment program with multi-funding approach, does not directly link to Indicators 4—6, but progress on this output would be reflected in the METTS. The project has not placed much emphasis on legal aspects to date, but this could change in the second half of the project as discussed below.

**Indicator 6**. **Capacity Development scorecards 70% by the end of the project**. At project design the previous GEF project’s (PIMs 4190 - Strengthening Seychelles’ protected area system through NGO management modalities) capacity scorecard assessments in 2014 for ICS, SNPA and PCU was used as the baseline. Ideally a capacity baseline would have been set for *all* partners at project design. PAF has also not done its own assessment at mid-term, but can refer to the Outer Islands MTR baseline for November 2016 (this is discussed further below).

Two Indicators duplicate each other and are inconsistent. Indicator 7 specifies that 100% of PA generated revenue is retained in PA system. This will be achieved once SNPA move to being financial autonomous in January 2019. Indicator 8a is that SNPA reaches [more] financial autonomy (a softer target than Indicator 7), while Indicator 8b is that at least 50% of SNPA’s site- generated revenue retained (again a softer target than indicator 7). Indicator 7 appears again in Indicator 9a where point 3 states that ‘park entry fees & SNPA fees will be fully retained.’

It is observed that the indicators do not explicitly reflect the level of effort that is being placed in terms of investment and time management for Output 2.2 (Essential touristic or other relevant infrastructure in selected PAs and new cost-effective practices, systems and schemes are implemented). The 13 activities under Output 2.2 are however indirectly captured in the METTS and potentially the Financial scorecards if the investments result in increased visitors within the project timeframe. Given that 73% of the GEF grant and a considerable amount of project management time is being invested in this component, including a specific indicator for activities 2.2.1-13 was discussed, with an increase in visitor numbers being a possible measure. However, on balance adding an additional indicator is not recommended, but it should be made explicit how the improvements in sites related to Output 2.2 have improved scores under the METTS and Financial Scorecards when they are completed for the Terminal Evaluation.

Under component 2, Output 3.1- Operationalization of planned and possibly innovative funding mechanisms (e.g. SeyCCAT) makes clear provisions for biodiversity provisions, **in particular to address the PAS financing gap, is captured by indicator 9. Indicator** 9c relates to innovative finance (Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES) – water and/or flood & sediment control, Carbon credits, Biodiversity Offsets, Hydropower potential) – with at least 1 trail. It is proposed to revise this indicator to reflect better opportunities that have emerged in terms of innovative financing since project design (see recommendation number 1). These relate to the proposed SeyCCAT mechanism - Blue Enterprise Fund and the Airport Conservation Fee. Payments for Ecosystem Services may be viable in the long term (e.g. a water PES) and there is reference to PES in the Water Policy Act (in terms of making provision for upstream management). Biodiversity offsets are also seen as longer term and first require a stronger EIA system and a legal mandate.

One activity– Activity 2.2.8. ‘Glass bottom boat feasibility study of tourism options for all SNPA PAs’ has been dropped. This is because it is not seen as an appropriate activity to be managed by SNPA and should rather be managed through concession agreements with private businesses in due course.

## Progress Towards Results

### Progress Towards Outcomes Analysis

Annex 4 provides a summary table of project achievements to date at the *activity* level based on a review of the Project Document, quarterly progress reports, the PIR 2017, work-plans and interviews with stakeholders.

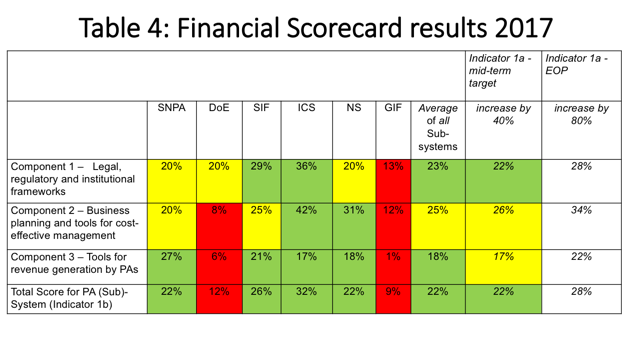
Annex 3 presents the Progress Towards Results Matrix which indicates progress towards the logframe indicators against midterm targets (where applicable) and end-of-project (EOP) targets. Progress is color coded based on a “traffic light system” where green indicates that the target has been achieved, yellow that the project is on target to reach the end of project target and red that the project is not on target to reach the end of project indicator. Recommendations are made for areas marked as “Not on target to be achieved” (red). The matrix presented in Annex 3 is summarized below in Table 3.

**Table 3: Summary Progress Towards Results Matrix**

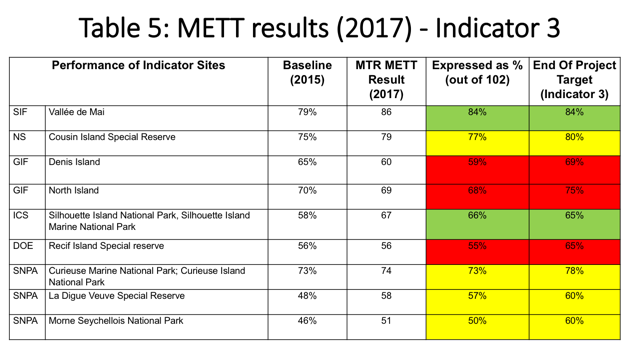
|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Indicator** | **Achievement rating / Progress** | **Justification** |
| **Objective** | SATISFACTORY |  |
| **Indicator 1a**: Scores for the entire PA System and for the three components of the scorecard: |  | Overall midterm target reached. Slightly below target on component 2. |
| **Indicator 1b**: Overall scores for each of the six main sub-subsystems, as assessed separately be PA managing entities: SNPA, DoE, SIF, ICS, NS, GIF. |  | Coded as red as only 50% of subsystems reaching midterm targets.  SNPA has already reached EOP targets.  ICS, NS and GIF did not reach mid term target  GIF unlikely to reach target if sites not designated by end of project.  Scores may be lower for sub-system due averages being taken across individual sites, rather than the highest value being use. |
| **Indicator 2:**  Absolute and relative annual financing gap for the entire PAS (using the six main PA sub-systems as a proxy):  (a) under a basic PA management scenario;  (b) under an optimal PA management scenario; (c) projected over 5 years under a basic PA management scenario |  | EOP target already achieved for basic scenario, but not for optimal scenario, although there is a significant improvement since PIR, 2017  Projection over 5 years has already reached EOP target |
| **Indicator 3:**  Evolution in **METT Scores** for indicator sites reflect improvements in conservation security in terrestrial and marine ecosystems |  | EOP target achieved at: Vallée de Mai and Silhouette Island National Marine Park  Improvement against baseline at: Cousin Island Special Reserve; La Digue Veuve Special Reserve; Morne Seychellois National Park  No change at: Curieuse National Marine Park – 73%  Decline against baseline at: Denis Island, North Island, Recif Island Special Reserve  Recif Island score expected to increase with finalization of its management plan.  Increase in overall METT scores likely if Denis & North are excluded |
| Outcome 1: | SATISFACTORY |  |
| Indicator 4: Total finances increase by 50%, based on 6 sub-systems |  | Assumes SNPA financial autonomy and mechanism to increase SNPA finances are successfully executed (e.g. fee increase, on-line ticket systems to avoid leakages) |
| Indicator 5a. PAS Financing & Investment Plan approved by Government and under implementation |  | Plan is completed but not yet approved. This is in the hands of the Government. |
| Indicator 5b. 4 PA Investment plans actively implemented (sites, sub-system, system level). |  | SNPA Strategic Plan completed  MCSS developing a Strategic Plan due for completion 2018  SIF developing a Strategic Plan  Consultants being identified to develop business plans for Denis and North  [Note: Business Plans are embedded within Strategic Plans] |
| Indicator 6: Capacity Development scorecards 70% by the end of the project |  | Coded as red as the overall Capacity Scores (Systemic, Institutional and Individual) declined from an average of 60% to 55.4%. This is based on assessments undertaken by the Outer Island Project for their MTR in October 2016.  The baseline is not comprehensive across sites/systems – it only covers SNPA, ICS and PCU  Links to capacity development activities e.g. 1.2.1 management plans training. |
| Indicator 7. 100% of PA generated revenue retained in PA system |  | This will be achieved once SNPA formally moves to financial autonomy – planned for January 2019 |
| **Outcome 2:** | SATISFACTORY |  |
| **Indicator 8**: SNPA’s ability to retain its site-level revenues (a) SNPA status is upgraded and it reaches *more* financial autonomy;  (b) at least 50% of SNPA’ site-generated revenue can be retained by the institution |  | Duplicates indicator 7. See above |
| Indicator 9a: *Current domestic revenue sources* maintained – 1/ existing environment & conservation budgets are enough to cover the gap for state run sub-system; 2/ Government levies; 3/ park entry fees & SNPA fees will be fully retained; 4/ Public private finance mechanisms; 5/ Forms of cross-subsidization. |  | On track to implement new levies targeted at PAs and to increase park entrance fees |
| Indicator 9b: International revenue sources. The SeyCCAT is fully operational & disbursing |  | The SeyCCAT is operational and disbursing. It is expected to grow its asset base by the end of the project |
| Indicator 9c: Innovative finance (PES – water and/or flood & sediment control, Carbon credits, Biodiversity Offsets, Hydropower potential) – at least 1 trail |  | Focus to move to supporting proposed SeyCCAT mechanism, which would support financing at the system level – namely the Blue Enterprise Fund, and the Tourism Conservation Levy |

Two sub-indicators (1a and 1b) have midterm targets. Indicator 1a is based on the financial scorecards and relates to the scores for the entire PA system (represented through the indicator sites) and for each component of the scorecard. The midterm target of an increase by 40% (equivalent to a score of 22%) is achieved overall. However, two components are slightly below the midterm target - namely component 2 - business planning and component 3 – tools for revenue generation (Table 4). Components 2 is expected to increase by the end of the project with the completion of the business plans. The scores for component 3 are heavily affected by the low scores for DOE whose sites have limited ability to raise revenue, and would benefit from cross subsidization or a system level financing mechanism, and GIF sites (North and Denis) whose scores are low as they are not PAs.

Measurement of progress against indicator 6 is problematic as the baseline was only established for SNPA, ICS and the PCU at project design, and was based on an assessment undertaken for another GEF project. PAF did do undertaken a capacity assessment for the midterm review. However, assessments by other projects (namely the Outer Islands project in November 2016, and the planned assessments under the proposed R2R project (GEF6) indicate that an additional assessment by PAF would not be welcome / needed at this point. It is recommended that the project undertakes an assessment for ICS and SNPA, which can act as indicators for capacity building with particular emphasis on SNPA to help inform capacity development, for the Terminal Evaluation.



Indicator 3 is based on the Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) scores achieving specified improvements in conservation security by the end of the project. The METTs were updated specifically to inform the MTR. The scores fell at 8 out of 19 sites, however, in most cases this is due to over optimistic scoring in 2015, rather than management changes (Table 5). Of note, 2 indicator sites have achieved their end of project targets by the midterm (Valle de Mai, and Silhouette Island NP). The GIF sites and the DOE site have the biggest gap to close in the timeframe of the project. This is *un*likely to be addressed for North and Denis given the low probability of the sites achieving PA status within the next couple of years. In terms of SNPA sites, improvements across the sites relative to the baseline are evident. However, SNPA will only achieve the end of project targets if momentum is maintained in the delivery of works across the sites being funded by the project and the Government, and if the move to financial autonomy is successful (discussed further below).



**Key achievements cited in the MTR interviews include:**

* **Development of SNPA Strategic Plan (2017-2021) and approval of SNPA financial autonomy**. The Strategic Plan presents a good example for other Ministries in Seychelles and is available on the Indian Ocean Commission website as an illustration of best practices. SNPA financial autonomy, to come into place in January 2019, is critical for the revitalization of SNPA.
* **SNPA corporate identify and branding** guidelines have been developed and are being applied to all SNPA signage and information materials, ensuring consistent messaging and building awareness of SNPA. This will contribute to consolidating SNPA’s position in Government as well as in the public eye as the principal agency responsible for PA strategy and management, justifying financial autonomy and strengthening its voice in future discussions about PA system expansion.
* The project supported the operationalization of the **Seychelles Conservation and Climate Adaptation Trust Fund** (SeyCCAT), which is utilizing funds from the 2015 Debt buy-back agreement and building the asset base to finance management and conservation of the expanded MPA system. The PAF TA sits on the SeyCCAT Finance committee and is actively involved in discussions to strengthen national PA financing at a system scale through innovative financial mechanisms.

**Overview of progress towards results – component 1** (see Annex 4 for overview of all activities).

The **Protected Areas System Financing and Investment Plan** for Seychelles has been completed, validated by stakeholders and presented to the Ministry of Finance Trade and Economic Planning (MFTEP). It sets out the national strategy for increasing revenue capture by all PAs by 50% by 2020. It is currently awaiting formal endorsement by the Government of Seychelles.

**Development of Management Plans** (MP) - ongoing and covering 13 sites. The development of the MP was delayed until after the implementation of training for all PAs on management planning. Subsequently, many of the management plans have faced delays related to difficulties identifying consultants with the right skill set to lead the MP and/or delays in the review and approval of plans by SNPA related to their limited capacity in this area. The project is attempting to use different consultants for each site in order to build capacity in Management Plan development. This strategy requires the project team to provide a lot of support as for many consultants it is the first time they are drafting PA MP, but this should help ensure the sustainability of these skills. The MP for Curieuse is now completed and awaiting approval by the SNPA CEO. Curieuse is a flagship site for SNPA and its MP will serve as a model for other sites. Management plans are in final stages of development for Port Launay/Baie Ternay Marine National Parks. They had faced delays but are now being undertaken by an ex-SNPA staff member with a good understanding of the project. MPs are also to be developed under the project for Saint Anne, Veuve, Iles Cocos, while the *Outer Island project* is supporting the development of MPs for Desroches, Alphonse, Poivre and Farquhar. A framework management plan for Fond Ferdinand (a new PA site) was completed in 2017 at the direct request of Government. Fond Ferdinand is not specifically mentioned in the Project Document as it is a new site – hence project involvement at this PA represents adaptive management on the part of the project to respond to a new Government priority. The development of the Morne Seychellois Management Plan has been delayed pending completion of a **National Policy on Land Ownership in National Parks.** The project has supported a preliminary assessment (status quo analysis) which can be developed into a management plan upon completion of the above-mentioned policy.

**Business plans,** which are embedded in Strategic Plans have been completed for SNPA (see below), and are under development for MCSS. Under component 2 business plans are being developed for SIF and North and Denis Islands. The development of business plans has been a challenge at North and Denis Island. GIF is searching for a consultant to write a business plan for North Island, which will be used as a model for Denis Island[[14]](#footnote-14).

**Quantification of contribution of PAs to the economy.** An economic assessment of the contribution of tourism in State-managed PAs to the country’s economy using the Tourism Economic Model for Protected Areas (TEMPA) is currently on hold. In late 2017, the project presented the methodology to the Minister of Environment, Energy and Climate Change and project partners. PAF was advised to proceed cautiously, due to the current political climate surrounding tourism and the unwillingness of tourism operators to accept additional charges/taxes (even if applied directly to the tourists themselves). The project currently awaits further guidance from the NPD as to whether to proceed with TEMPA. Meanwhile the project is collaborating with the GEF SWIOFISH3 project to undertake an ecosystem services valuation to support the MSP.

**Online and point of sale ticketing system**. The increase in fees is being complemented by a more effective fee collection system for SNPA sites, due to go live in January 2019, after a 3 month testing and training period [[15]](#footnote-15)**.** This activity was delayed as it was originally envisaged that the Department of Information and Communication Technology (DICT) would implement the new system but was unable to do so. The design of the system is now being delivered by a private contractor. Strong enforcement will be needed when the system is introduced to embed the new system and change behavior. There are still some issues to be solved at some sites, for example SNPA does not have a landing site as Saint Anne, therefore an agreement is needed on where the point of sale kiosk will be located. Some opposition to the changes are expected on-the-ground from those who benefit from the laxity of the existing system.

**Hotel contributions.** Most guests staying at hotels within or bordering Marine National Parks currently do not pay an entrance fee, although this is required by law. The PAF is helping SNPA to address this loophole and ensure the fair application of user fees[[16]](#footnote-16). This will further increase SNPA revenues by an estimated 30%.

**Training and capacity building**. A one-week enforcement training was held in 2016, attended by 26 people. The second enforcement training (to be funded by the Outer Island project) is delayed until approval of Nature Reserve and Conservancy Bill by the National Assembly. A stakeholder engagement and conflict resolution workshop was held in September 2016. Management Plan Training in 2016 was attended by 24 people from eleven organizations. The consultant selected for the MP training reportedly did not have enough practical experience from which the generally well qualified conservation officers could benefit. This highlights the need to engage global experts with practical experience for future training. This was addressed for the Business Planning training. Business Plan training was held in September 2017 and attended by 21 people from 13 organizations over 4 days. It was facilitated by the PAF TA and funded by the Outer Island Project. It drew on expertise from around the world, some presented as videos, for example: Voluntary Dollar a Day program - Experience from Jamaica; The Nature Conservancy - Adopt an acre or adopt a reef program; Contribution of Tourism in Protected Areas to the Economy; Tourism; Enterprise Fund – Jamaica; Introduction to Impact Investing; and, Regional Trust Funds - Experience of the Caribbean Biodiversity Fund. The project continues to provide on-going support to develop the management and business plans. All training is open to all partners, serving as a mechanism for bringing parties together and thus a step in promoting a system approach. A learning exchange between Seychelles, Mauritius and Maldives was planned for early 2018, but was postponed as a State of Emergency was declared in the Maldives. However, there is now an opportunity to showcase the project and learn from other partners at COB COP 14, November 2018 (see below).

A **willingness-to-pay study** led by the project has informed the revisions to the fee system. It indicated that tourists were willing to pay more but that an increase in the fee rates should be accompanied by an improvement of the products and services on offer. The findings of the WTP study helped to develop a Financing Strategy for the PA system as a whole and SNPA’s Strategic Plan. The legislation is currently being updated to reflect the results of the WTP study. This change will increase the site-based revenue of SNPA by 50% (the entrance fee for SNPA marine parks is to increase from SR200 to SR300). The approved amendments of the marine NP entrance fees are expected to be implemented from 2019.

**A tourism assessment of products, services & infrastructure** offered by the national PA system, particularly the PAs managed by Seychelles National Parks Authority (SNPA), became a road map for component 2. The study was financed by UNDP BIOFIN

Corporate identify and branding guidelines have been finalized for SNPA and are being applied to all SNPA signage and information materials. A new logo and website were developed.

The project is starting to work on a **SNPA Marketing and Communications Plan**, to be finalized by December 2018. This will act as an amendment to the SNPA Strategic Plan. Marketing and Communications training is planned for all PAs / partners.

**Overview of progress towards results – component 2** (see Annex 4 for overview of all activities).

**SNPA Strategic Plan (2017-2021) and SNPA financial autonomy**. The SNPA Strategic Plan provides a justification for a revenue retention formula and was pivotal in securing SNPA’s financial autonomy from January 2019. This means that SNPA will be able to retain any excess revenue and re-invested it in nature conservation. The plan has been endorsed by the Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change and Ministry of Finance, Trade and Economic Planning. The SNPA Strategic plan is based by a number of technical studies supported by the project under Component 1, notably the WTP study and Tourism Assessment. The intention is to treble SNPAs revenue collection by 2020 (PIR, 2017). A Cabinet Paper for the establishment of an SNPA Trust Fund was approved by the Cabinet in Q4 2017. SNPA is currently awaiting clarification on the mechanism to establish the SNPA Trust Fund. A sub committee is being setup to look at all the operational requirements to facilitate the transition to financial autonomy.

Under Component 2 work with the **Seychelles National Parks Authority (SNPA)** is under way to systematically revitalize tourism attractions at their sites and thereby encourage visitors to spend more time and money there. It is hoped that the improvements will also create business opportunities in line with the SNPA strategic plan. There are 10 activities under Component 2 related to infrastructure improvements across 3 SNPA sites - Curieuse Marine NP, Veuve Reserve and, Ile Coco Marine NP. Emphasis has been placed on SNPA given that they have the largest financing gaps of all the national PA organizations. The work relates to improvements in signage, renovations of information centers, boardwalks, BBQ facilities, staff facilities, PV systems and mooring buoys. The work is being overseen by a **Technical Advisory Committee** including private sector and NGO representatives. In 2017 a systematic assessment of all nature trails was conducted and recorded in a database, providing precise information on the exact number, location and type of improvements to be implemented on 11 of the most popular SNPA trails. Through the works at SNPA sites the project is researching and testing sustainable materials (e.g. for boardwalks and buoys) to increase their longevity and hence cost-effectiveness which can inform similar developments at other sites.

**SNPA activities under component 2** have faced a range of delays and quality issues as detailed in Annex 4 highlighting why these activities need to be closely managed to deliver the infrastructure improvements on time and to standard. Examples include:

* The infrastructure work and signage undertaken at the start of the project, before the PM and TA were on board, was not of a high standard. For example: (i) the signs were often in the wrong place and lacked conformity; (ii) The work on the information displays at the Doctors House at Curieuse NP has missing text in some places and duplication in others between the English and French versions, highlighting the need for quality control / review measures to be put in place. Overall, the early work was done prior to any proper planning or sensitization of SNPA on the issues. It was therefore necessary for the project to take a step back and first focus on supporting the SNPA planning and procurement processes in order to identify priorities and ensure things are done properly. The key objective is to instill quality control processes within SNPA. This is one of the reasons why the project has been underspending (see Section 4.3.3).
* It has reportedly been difficult to get the three quotes needed for some of the activities. The project is managing a lot of small scale activities and it would have been more cost-effective to have fewer, larger initiatives.
* At Curieuse NP the project invested in the auxiliary equipment needed to install and maintain the buoys. Some buoys were damaged during installation and needed to be repaired. Boat operators do not have confidence in the existing mooring buoys. SNPA is currently finalizing a buoy management plan which will better manage the maintenance of the buoys and provide useful information to boat operators.
* The installation of VHF systems to link SNPA boats with terrestrial base stations on Curieuse, La Digue and Praslin was not to standard and the second phase of the project has been put on hold.

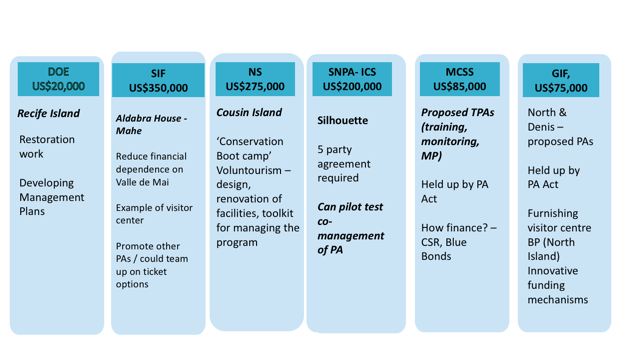
The project is supporting the **piloting of new and innovative revenue-generation systems** in various PAs managed by the project partners. The diversity of entities and modalities involved in PA management, and indeed the project design, can be seen as a strength as it allows Seychelles to test different types of mechanisms, which it is hoped can provide generally applicable solutions/models and lessons.

* **DOE – Recife National Park**. Restoration work on Recif NP was double the actual budget, but it was agreed that DOE will cover the full cost of communication network (satellite phone system), and remaining funds will go towards the management plan. A view has been expressed that the original proposal in the Project document was not very well thought out or budgeted. Drafting of the MP is now underway after delays in identifying the right consultant (the original plan was to complete it in 2016). Recif NP cannot generate funds and so needs to be grant-supported or cross-financed.
* **SIF – Aldabra House**. Aldabra House aims to bring the experience of the remote Outer Island of Aldabra to Mahe, as well as raise awareness on conservations issues. An iconic building is being designed in collaboration with the Eden project in the UK, to be located on route from the airport to Victoria where it will have high visibility. It is planned for completion in 2020. Fees raised from visitation to the education centre will support the conservation activities on Aldabra, a World Heritage Site, which is current cross subsidized from SIF’s Valle de Mai Nature Reserve. Aldabra House will provide an example for other PA visitor centres. It may also directly benefit other PAs by promoting local conservation organizations and their sites and potentially supporting ticket sales to other PAs. The development of Aldabra House may be seen as part of Seychelles’ effort to diversify its tourism offering, as well as providing a rainy day activity for tourists on Mahe.
* **NS – Cousin Island**. A new-style voluntourism operation– the Conservation Boot camp, has been established aiming to provide an initial conservation career-building opportunity. The initiative is running well, and efforts are now being placed on attracting more people, potentially through collaboration with universities. This initiative compliments existing operations welcoming volunteers at sites operated by SNPA, MCSS, GIF, SIF and ICS.
* **SNPA- ICS** – **Silhouette (activity 2.2.10).** SNPA have been allocated a grant of US$200,000 to develop a co-management agreement on Silhouette Island. To date there is still no formal agreement on how to proceed, although a project outline was developed in June 2018. There are 5 Parties involved – IDC, ICS, SNPA, Hilton Labriz Hotel and Silhouette Foundation (which is in affect includes the four other parties plus MEECC and La Belle Tortue Lodge). The island is leased to IDC. ICS has had a presence on the Island since 2011 and manages the conservation work for all the terrestrial areas. This is financed through a conservation levy paid by the Hilton Labriz Hotel each month. SNPA is responsible for the marine area. It does not have a presence on the island and travel costs to and from the island are high. The Island provides an opportunity to pilot a co-management solution and integrated planning where by the island is managed as one site incorporating the terrestrial and marine areas. The dominant view is that rather than reallocating the money at this midterm stage on account of there having been no activity to date, the parties should be given a strict timeframe within which to reach a formal agreement on a way forward and to commence activities. A strong argument for persevering is that the situation at Silhouette is similar to the Outer Islands / marine parks under the MSP, and the site can serve as a litmus test for co-management[[17]](#footnote-17). Although difficult, if successful this would be a good outcome for the project. Conversely, failure to succeed at Silhouette draws further into question the willingness of parties to co-operate and the feasibility of a PA system. The amended objective of the sub-project (drafted June 2018, but yet to be formally agreed) is to pilot test and disseminate a collaborative model of management. A MP for the terrestrial areas already exists. Conditions for project funding are based on the expansion of this MP to include the MPA, management of the Island as one integrated site and a detailed sustainable financing strategy. Revenue sharing is needed, *or* alternatively, SNPA may consider delegating authority to ICS as it may be more cost-effective to have 1 presence on the Island, and to have an oversight role.
* **MCSS – Temporary Protected Areas (TPAs)** (this activity is under component 1 – Activity 1.3.4 but since it is partner based and operational it is better aligned with Component 2 activities. MCSS is also being supported under activity 1.1.1 to develop a Strategic Plan covering 5 TPAs). The budget allocated to support 5 TPAs is not enough and has been supplemented through counterpart funding. While the designation of TPAs is dependent on the passing of the Nature Conservancy and Reserve Bill, MCSS has been undertaking patrolling and other activities as if the TPAs were officially designated, but without the authority to enforce. This has generated data to update the TPAs nomination files. The initiative fits well with the proposed GEF 6 Ridge to Reef project. More work is needed to determine how TPAs can be sustainably financed (other than through CSR contributions at site level), potentially through system level finance mechanisms. The project TA is supporting MCSS with a Strategic Plan/Sustainable Financing strategy for this reason.
* **GIF – North & Denis Island**. The project is supporting awareness-raising facilities on Denis and North Islands, encouraging high-end clients to contribute funds to conservation initiatives. Delays in building the visitor centres in both islands has delayed the implementation of some of the financing mechanism activities.

It is important that initiatives supported by PAF can demonstrate how they contribute PA financing at site and system level and how they could be upscaled. An overview of PAF Partner activities in presented in Figure 2.

**Support to SeyCCAT**. The PAF project is working with SeyCCAT to create new opportunities to further capitalize SeyCCAT and support protected area management. The PAF Technical Advisor has been appointed to the Finance Committee of SeyCCAT, which is mandated to grow the asset base of SeyCCAT. The Finance Committee has approved two new financing options to be investigated: (i) a Blue Enterprise Fund and (ii) a tourist conservation levy. The project is providing inputs on both of these initiatives, which are not purely linked to PAs.

**Figure 2: Overview of Partner activities under PAF, with PAF grant allocations**

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### Remaining barriers to achieving the project objectives

The project is being held back by the Nature Reserve and Conservancy Bill, which is not yet approved. Specifically, this has implications for work on the TPA, North and Denis designation and the second stage of enforcement training[[18]](#footnote-18). It is understood that the Government is close to endorsing the Bill, at which point a white paper will be developed and consulted on for a minimum of 21 working days, after which it will pass to the National Assembly to be voted on and approved by the President. Regulations will then need to be developed. Both the Outer Island project and SWIOFISH3 have offered help to facilitate the drafting of the regulations.

Although not obstructing the work, approval of PA Finance Plan is key as it directly links to project indicator 5a.

SNPA is seen as a key project risk based on the focus placed on SNPA by the project coupled with the fact that the next 18 months will be critical for SNPA while it transitions to an autonomous entity. SNPA is a large institution which is understaffed and under-financed. A considerable amount of the project’s money and time is focused on building up SNPA. This is justified by the fact that while SNPA has the greatest number of PAs, it is the weakest in terms of management capability.

There was a suggestion that the PAF Project Manager could in the second half of the project spend less time supporting SNPA and more time supporting component 1 activities and other partners. However, given the current situation it seems that SNPA will require at least the same level of support from the project team, if not more.

The SNPA transition will require a strong management team and support to successfully manage the change. There are two elements to this transition – the recent change in senior management and the forthcoming move to financial autonomy. In April 2018 SNPA’s chair was appointed as its CEO. While this is good for SNPA and the project in terms of continuity, the project had built up a close working relationship with the previous CEO (who has been reassigned to Waste Management) and the Deputy CEO (who has recently resigned), and activities have slowed down pending clarification of how the project will now work with SNPA (*see below*). SNPA is extremely busy preparing for the move to financial autonomy in January 2019, and reaching a formal agreement on its financing system.

Given the limited capacity at SNPA there is a concern that they will be unable to efficiently progress simultaneously on three key fronts – preparing for financial autonomy, delivering PAF activities, and absorbing a SR5 million grant from the MOF to be spent on infrastructure development in its national parks by the end of 2018. While SNPA are planning to hire (senior) staff over the coming months, it is unclear how successful this will be given the limited pool of experts within the Seychelles as a Small Island Developing State (SIDS), and the fact that the uncompetitive SNPA salaries are not conducive with hiring and retaining staff. SNPA salaries should become more competitive in time as its finances improve, but this does not solve the immediate need. It may be necessary to hire some key positions for a year as a consultant to attract the right people.

There is an urgent need for SNPA to agree a delivery model with the PAF. An overall focal point for the PA Finance work is needed supported by leads for individual activities in relevant SNPA units, with whom the PAF Project Manager can readily liaise. At the moment the CEO is acting as the focal point for the PAF work, which requires a range of micro operational decisions. This takes him away from higher level strategic work critical to SNPA at this important juncture. SNPA plans to hire someone to work exclusively on Curieuse NP, but it is not clear how quickly this person can be hired and brought up to speed. From the project perspective, it is critical that the momentum is not further lost. There has been an underspend by SNPA during the first half of the project, for the reasons describe above, and further delays brings into question the ability to deliver on PAF activities.

There are two concrete ways in which the project can support the SNPA immediately: (i) hiring legal-institutional support to prepare for financial autonomy; and, (ii) using part of the SNPA grant money to hire a project manager to oversee the PAF infrastructure work to ensure it is delivered on time and to standard.

## Project Implementation and Adaptive Management

### Management Arrangements

The NPD recognizes the importance of the project. He is the project’s main means of communicating with other Ministries such as the MOF and partners. The project is dependent on the NPD for facilitating, for example, the approval of the the Nature Reserves and Conservancies Bill

The National Financing Plan, meetings and discussions on Silhouette, and away forward on the TEMPA study.

There is a small but strong, cohesive and complementary project team in place consisting of a Project Manager and full time Technical Advisor. While the project started in March 2016, the Project Manager started in October 2016, while the Technical Advisor started part-time in June 2016 and full time in mid-August 2016. The Project Manager has held previous positions with a number of the project partners (e.g. SNPA, SIF, GIF). While this is his first time managing a GEF project, he has been supported by the Technical Advisor and his in-post development can be considered a capacity building achievement of the project. The Technical Advisor’s role is split between three main responsibilities –overall technical advice for the project, advisor to SNPA and capacity building / support to the Project Manager.

The Technical Advisor’s position has been extended until December 2019. It is not clear if there will be funds beyond this to support this role, and this has important implications for the profiling and prioritization of the technical aspects of the project related to PA site and system level financing.

The Project Manager and Technical Advisor are part of the Programme Coordination Unit (PCU), and therefore hired by the Government (MEECC), not by UNDP. The PCU overseas the implementation of GEF and other projects and supports the Government. It is currently managing 4 projects (3 GEF projects and 1 Adaptation Fund project). There are cost efficiencies associated with this set up as normally each (GEF) project would have their own administrative and finance staff, while under the PCU one person manages the finances, for example, for all 4 projects. The system makes it easier to attract, train and develop good finance and administrative personnel, since the work is not project specific allowing a more secure and longer term career path. This is particular suited to Seychelles which due to its small size has a limited talent base to draw on.

The head of the PCU retired in April 2018, but remains under a part-time contract to provide backstopping and support to the Government, remotely from the UK, until the end of 2018. He has been involved in the project for the past 5 years including during its preparatory stage providing administrative support and technical guidance. The Project Manager of the Outer Island project is the acting interim head of the PCU, pending a replacement. However, it is understood that the replacement will be national hire, and have a largely administrative role. Going forward each GEF project will have their own TAs. The ex-head of the PCU had acted as a good sounding board for the project, which will no longer be available from 2019.

The Steering Committee intends to meet every six months and has held 3 meetings so far (January 2016, February 2017, October 2017), which have been well attended. The reason for the 13 month gap between the first and second meeting is that the first meeting was held ahead of the project inception phase, which was delayed, with the second meeting held six months after project start-up. The next SC meeting was been planned to coincide with the MTR process, and due to delays in contracting the MTR consultant, will be held in September 2018 (an eleven month gap since the last SC meeting). Outside of meetings the Steering Committee are also requested to comment on TORs and work plans. A number of respondent suggested that the SC could work better, providing more of an advisory role and being more active in discussions on ideas and decisions to be made. The SC meetings can also be used as an opportunity to build more cohesion between PA partners, a requisite for System Approach. A possible format is for each meeting to be based on themes of common interest to partners, where a partner with a particular area of knowledge provides a short presentation followed by a discussion of how the approach may be adapted to other sites both in the Inner and Outer islands. The themes/ areas of discussion need not be related to financing mechanisms and their objective would be to build a better understanding and cohesion between partners. The SC meetings are designed to provide updates on the components being undertaken by each partner, although many stated that they were not clear on what other partners were doing. It may be necessary therefore to change the format of the feedback from partners, and to include discussions on lessons learnt and opportunities for upscaling the initiatives being piloted.

UNDP has an oversight and monitoring role as described in Section 3. The fact that UNDP and the PCU are located in the same office, facilitates communication and collaboration. The (UNDP) RTA has been involved in the project since its inception. She visits once a year.

### Work Planning

The PM prepares annual work plans, which are discussed and shared with the partners. Some work-plans prepared by partners lack detail, making it hard to clearly identify how money is being spent.

The project initially faced delays due to the hiring of the project team (Project Manager and Technical Advisor), who were in place 6 months into the project. As discussed above there have been various delays in implementation linked to the difficulties in hiring technical consultant (e.g. for the Management Plans), planning and implementing investment efficiently at SNPA sites (including procurement delays), lack of constructive dialogue on Silhouette, and agreements with private Islands.

### Finance and co-finance

Underspending against agreed annual work-plans has been an issue throughout the project, as discussed at the last Steering Committee Meeting October 2017. In the first year of the project partners asked for money which they did not spend. The project was reportedly stricter in the second year but there was still an underspend in component 2. Underspending has implications for all partners as if 80% expenditure overall is not reached, additional direct payments cannot be disbursed from the UNDP system.

The Project has a GEF grant of US$2,776,900, 48% of which has been spent as of June 2018, based on UNDP’s Combined Delivery Report (CDR). There are various areas of concern in terms of expenditure. For example, around 16% of SNPA’s budget for contractual services and equipment and furniture under Component 2 (totaling US$515,00) has been spent as of June 2018 (with an expenditure profile of 5% in 2016, 8.5% in 2017, and 2.5 % in the first half of 2018). SNPA activities in component 2 were deliberately slowed down in the second half of 2016 to ensure that they were planned properly and of high quality and PAF has been active in tracking progress and developing work-plans with SNPA. However, activity has reportedly slowed down again recently.

SNPA/ICS US$200,000 budgeted grant has not been touched, and an agreed proposal between the parties is needed before this activity can start (see discussion under 4.2.1).

A divergence of views on financial aspects was expressed between the PCU / UNDP and Nature Seychelles (NS). Nature Seychelles say that they always have to chase the PCU for money and that there were a lot of delays, leaving them inadequate time to spend 80% of the amount allocated within a quarter. A review of cash advances versus expenditure shows that NS have been slow in spending. For example, in Q2 2016 they were advanced US$50,000 and had a balance at the end of the year of $5,362. In 2017, cash advances were only requested for Q1 and Q2 and they were left with a balance of US$5,662. In 2018, Q2 they requested a lower cash advance than set out in the work-plan and Budget 2018, of which they have only spent 56%. Nature Seychelles’ Grant Agreement will end in March 2019, and a grant extension may be required. Ageing cash advances (over 6 months) have resulted in an additional reporting burden for the PCU /UNDP.

The GIF Grant Agreement ends in 2018. The grant amount is relatively small and they have spent 62% so far. They have also resubmitted a new work-plan for the remaining months of 2018, setting out how the remaining 38% will be spent.

PCU Administration cost are under 5% of the total GEF grant. Administrative costs are likely to decrease when the new Project (GEF 6) starts in 2019, as the costs will be allocated across five projects rather than four.

There have been no significant budget revisions as yet. However, changes may be needed going forward to reallocate money that cannot be realistically spent in the project period, or is unlikely to be spend effectively. A budget revision would be needed to fund the Technical Advisor beyond December 2019.

The project has benefitted from some cost –effective interventions. For example, MEECC has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Government of PRC’s National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) to install solar photovoltaic panels at Curieuse PA. The project has been very active in supporting the implementation of this South-South climate change cooperation framework this was brokered by UNDP Seychelles following notification from UNDP in China.It represents an $80,000 cost saving to the project (Activity 2.2.6).

According to the PIR, 2017, delays caused by Government processes in releasing funds to partners or consultants have been a constraint, but have not had a significant impact on PCU effectiveness. Partner organizations have received training to adjust to the new financial reporting, specifically the FACE Forms, implemented by UNDP.

The project was independently audited in April 2018. No issues were identified.

Table 6 presents the co- financing monitoring table. Around 17% of the committed co-financing has been made available at the mid term stage (as of June 2018). A number of partners have so far contributed a relatively small amount of their commitment – for example, Denis Private Island 17.5%, SNPA – 10.5%, Nature Seychelles – 7% and MEECC 1.7%. Given these low contributions at the mid-term stage it looks unlikely that all co-financing will materialize. This needs to be clarified by the PCU and Partners and the implications on delivery outlined. The MEECC co-financing is the amount to be disbursed by SeyCCAT. This was expected to be US$7 million on the then assumption that the debt swap amount would be quite a lot higher than it actually was (it was originally expected to be around $80 million). Actual co-finance may be calculated based on the total disbursement to date from SeyCCat, less any disbursement of GEF blue grant funds from SWIOFish. Better oversight of co-financing is required to understand how much and when co-financing will be provided and how this aligns with work-plans.

**Table 6: Co-financing (US$)**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Co-financier** | **Co-financing commitment (US$)** | **Contribution Year 1**  **Apr 2016 - Mar 2017** | **Contribution Year 2**  **Apr 2017 - Jun 2018** | **Total Contributions (% of commitment)** |
| North Island Seychelles | **226,981** | 101,469 | 76,764.00 | **178,233**  **(78%)** |
| Banyan Tree Seychelles | **230,000** | 46,415 | 46,623.00 | **93,038**  **(40%)** |
| Seychelles Island Foundation | **1,400,000** | 399,138 | 362,251.00 | **761,389**  **(54%)** |
| Denis Private Island | **182,413** | 13,706 | 18,306.00 | **32,012**  **(17.5%)** |
| Green Island Foundation (GIF) | **90,260** | 21,471 | 27,750.00 | **49,220**  **(54%)** |
| Marine Conservation Society of Seychelles (MCSS) | **200,000** | 40,557 | 45,380.00 | **85,937**  **(42%)** |
| Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change (MEECC) | **7,000,000** | 55,292 | 69,115 | **124,407**  **(1.7%)** |
| Nature Seychelles (NS) | **1,570,000** | 106,702 | 115,043 | **221,745**  **(7%)** |
| Seychelles National Parks Authority (SNPA) | **3,200,000** | 122,300 | 212,145 | **334,445**  **(10.5%)** |
| The Nature Conservancy (TNC) | **1,000,000** | 712,600 | 378,414 | **1,091,014**  **(109%)** |
| **TOTAL**  **Co-financing** | **15,099,654** | **1,497,349** | **1,139,646** | **2,636,995** |

Notes: Numbers have been rounded

### Project-level Monitoring and Evaluation Systems

Monitoring and Evaluation activities and responsibilities and budgets are clearly set out in the Project Document.

All reporting for the project has been on time. PIRs and quarterly progress reports are generally comprehensive, and have been prepared with contributions from all partners. However, Partners have not always submitted their individual reports in time to be included in the project quarterly reports, despite there being clear deadlines.

The METTs and Financial Scorecards are also produced in collaboration with partners and are core evaluation tools for the project, providing the basis for 4 out of the 9 project’s results indicators. The Financial Scorecard (Part 1) has been institutionalized, with support from the project, and is currently being used by the Government of Seychelles’ reporting to the Convention on Biological Diversity on conservation financing targets (PA Component).

### Stakeholder Engagement

The project involves a diverse range of partners – Government, parastatals, NGOs, which is challenging. See Annex 5 for an overview of project partners. All project partners are members of the SC and participated in training on enforcement, management planning and business planning. All partners, with the exception of Nature Seychelles, expressed the view during the MTR interviews that they are happy / very happy with the project and the support it has provided. Technical support has been strong, engagement has been dynamic and the project has achieved good visibility.

The only exception is Nature Seychelles, who felt that the project had for example, not responded to their requests, made decisions behind closed doors diverting money without telling them and had failed to invite them to SC meetings. A review of email exchanges and other documentation confirms that NS has attended all SC meetings and has been invited to all training and other consultative meetings, and received technical support when requested. The NS grant is comparable to other organisations and there is no evidence that funds were diverted inappropriately.

The President is reportedly committed to the MSP initiative and to PAs and supports SNPAs move to financial autonomy. Key Government Ministries support the objectives of the project (MEECC, MOFTEP, Ministry of Tourism (MOT)). The project has been working quite closely with the MOFTEP, who have been supportive of the project. There is a potential opportunity to develop closer links with the MOT, as the recently appointed Minister of Tourism was previously the Minister of Environment, Energy and Climate Change and hence is very familiar with the project. The MOT wish to diversify the tourism offering in the Seychelles which is largely focused on the beach and hotel activities. The obvious way of doing this is to offer more opportunities within PAs, terrestrial and marine. This can be facilitated, for example, by the improvement of trails and a greater variety of tours within PAs.

Given the dependence of the project on a range of Government approvals, it is key in the next half of the project that the NPD acts as a champion for the project to ensure that the project can progress efficiently. The PAF has requested a meeting, but has yet to meet with the new Minister of Environment, Energy and Climate Change to present the project to him, but it is hoped that he will also play a role in championing the project.

The PAF has engaged with the relatively new Department of Blue Economy under the Vice President’s Office. For example, the project developed a brief paper for the previous PS on a national tourism levy on air arrivals. Of note in late June 2018 the Cabinet approved the MSP recommendation to establish an Oceans Authority. The results of the MSP will be embedded within this Authority, and depending when it is established could potentially also embed and sustain the results of PAF.

The project is working with the Environmental Trust Fund (ETF), who also support SNPA on an *ad hoc* basis (e.g. in 2016 the ETF signed a MOU with SNPA to provide SR 1 million over 5 years to remove invasive creepers. It has also been supporting the upgrading of trails on La Digue). Proposals for funding have to be approved by the ETF Board. The ETF’s revenue is largely derived from the water levy (90%), and also from a fee of SR 1 per Sooty Tern egg (used to support monitoring activities on Recif Island) and a percentage of export profit on Coco de Mer (to be earmarked for Praslin Development Fund). The ETF would like to set up protocols with PAF and SeyCCAT so that all parties are aware who is funding what and to ensure funding is well coordinated and effective. It would also be beneficial for the ETF to join the PAF SC to facilitate collaboration.

The project has engaged with the **Private Sector**, especially with regard to infrastructure development for SNPA. The tourism assessments of SNPA sites as well as Fond Ferdinand involved multiple interviews with private sector businesses with an interest in the success of the PAs. The private sector has provided both technical support and financial support. Representatives from the hotel industry, tour guide association, and destination marketing companies are involved in the SNPA Technical Advisory Committee to support the revitalization of the SNPA tourism facilities. They act as a ‘sounding board’ for SNPA and provide their technical expertise to build SNPA’s capacity and improve the quality of the tourism products offered within the PAs. Private sector co-financing has been leveraged on a number of projects, such as the renovation of the Doctor’s House Information Centre by Air Seychelles, the building of barbeque facilities at Anse Major and toilet facilities on Curieuse island and Anse Major by local businesses (PIR, 2017).

The project has strong relationships with a number of related projects. Collaboration includes:

* GEF Outer Island Project – collaborated on training on and development of Management Plans, Business Plans and on enforcement training. Collaboration planned on the Communications and Marketing Strategy;
* MSP - member of Steering Commitee.
* SeyCCAT – PAF’s TA is a member of the Finance Committee. The former PC sat on the SeyCCAT Grants Committee;SWIOFISH3-PAF-SeyCCAT-MSP are successfully working together to join up expertise and work on finance and economics. The costing of the extended PA system (for the areas already gazette) will be undertake by the PA TA as a collaboration between PAF, SEYCCAT and MSP.
* BIOFIN – PAF member of BIOFIN SC and have collaborated throughout but have evolved to work on different financing mechanisms;[[19]](#footnote-19) BIOFIN financed the Tourism Assessment study.
* The EBA project is looking at a Mare aux Cochons RAMSAR site, within Morne Seychellois National park (managed by SNPA).

An ‘All Projects Meeting’ group has been set up, attended by all donors involved in PA management to share knowledge and manage synergies, of which PAF is a part.

### Reporting and adaptive management

The project has demonstrated adaptive management through, for example: (i) its approach to managing SNPA works under component 2 (namely recognizing the need to first prioritize and properly plan and project mange the work to ensure quality outputs as discussed above); (ii) supporting a framework management plan for Fond Ferdinand (a new PA site), when so requested by Government; and (iii) its decision to technically support a range of consultants to develop business plans to develop capacity in this area.

No significant management changes were requested through the PIR, 2017.

### Communications:

**Internal project communication and sharing lessons**

A number of partners stated that they would like to be better informed of what other partners are doing and project outcomes, as discussed above. It was noted at the validation workshop for the MTR that the previous GEF NGO project on PAs tried a number of times to address information sharing through a range of means – none of which worked[[20]](#footnote-20). However, if the willingness among partners for such information sharing is now stronger a discussion with partners on the most appropriate mechanisms to improve the learning and sharing between PA partners is timely and can be promoted through the project, initially as an agenda item for the next Steering Group Meeting.

There is a need to identify how the project’s successes and lessons can be better communicated and shared and crucially how they can inform coordinated development of the PA system beyond its current boundaries to encompass new TPAs and the expansion of the PA system in the outer islands. This is in line with the Project Document which notes that the creation of a project database of lessons learnt, tools (and conditions under which they are most applicable) and templates is important. Lessons have not been systematically documented as yet, but should be prioritized in the second half of the project. This information should be accessible to different stakeholder groups in order to support better future decision-making processes in protected areas and more consistent adoption of best practice.

A learning exchange with Comoros and Maldives, planned for November 2017 was canceled due to the political situation in the Maldives. It had been set up to encourage greater cooperation and collaboration between Small Islands Developing States (SIDS) in the Indian Ocean Region on PA financing. A view was expressed that while this knowledge exchange would strengthen collaboration in the region and allow Seychelles to disseminate its experiences and knowledge, there is also a need to identify exchanges with countries at similar to more advanced level of experience in PA finance from whom the Seychelles can learn (e.g. Jamaica, Belize, Grenada, St Kitts and Nevis, Egypt).

**External project communications**

COP14 Convention on Biodiversity, Egypt - November 2017 represents a high profile international forum at which Seychelles can showcase its work on PA financing and learn from other countries. A concept note has been prepared and is awaiting formal confirmation from the COP.

The project has contributed to UNDP SIDS newsletter (February 2017), which has attracted enquires from UNDP projects in St. Kitts and Nevis as well as Mauritius. The project TA has offered to provide advice and peer review of the St. Kitts and Nevis PA Financial Plan as well as present the project to UNDP Mauritius. The intention is to contribute towards South-South knowledge sharing and cooperation on PA financing (PIR, 2017).

In preparation for the Business Planning training, the project developed a database containing over 40 examples of terrestrial and marine business plans from around the world and guidelines for their development. This is currently openly available in a dropbox, but it would be better if it was attached more formally to a website as a global resource. Options include the BesNET website[[21]](#footnote-21) financed by UNDP or the Conservation Finance Alliance website who are happy to host the information.

Changing attitudes and building support for PAs in the Seychelles is important. Educational awareness campaigns by the project targeted at local Seychellois include the production of two posters on the benefits generated by terrestrial and marine PAs, which have been disseminated as national newspaper supplements, and directly to local communities, schools and environment clubs as a learning tool, and newspaper articles.

The Seychelles Tourism Board (STB) has been very active in advertising the PA trails. The PAF project has recently met with the Seychelles Tourism Board over the development of an App for tourism in PAs. The project and STB have agreed to investigate new, more strategic areas of collaboration, which will be identified during the marketing training organized for all PAs by the project (scheduled for September).

## Sustainability

The PAF has appropriately update the Risk matrix presented in the Project Document in the following ways: (i) Economic risk related to be establishment of SeyCCAT has been retired; (ii) Strategic risk related to Government support for PA revenue retention has been retired. Of note the Risk Matrix rates the following strategic risk as high ‘on-going conflicts and misunderstandings between public institutions, private sector partners, NGO and resource users undermine partnerships approaches and implementation of cooperative Governance arrangements for the Protected Area System’. To mitigate this risk it recommends that the project will operationalize an information partners dialogue forum for keeping communication channels open.

### Financial risks to sustainability

PA financial sustainability, on which the effective management of the PA system depends, is the key objective of the project, and so the project will not have achieved its objective if PA financing is not on a more secure footing at the end of the project.

SeyCCAT represents a longer-term mechanism, which can continue the work of PA finance. The close working relationship b etween the two entities is very promising in this respect. Financial stability is however a significant challenge given that there is a financing gap facing the current system of PA, and the SeyCCAT does not have enough money to finance the proposed expanded systems. It is critical therefore that alongside the support PAF provide at its project sites, it works with SeyCCAT to identify mechanisms that will grow its asset base and work at a system level.

### Socio-economic risks to sustainability

All stakeholders recognize the importance of sustainable finance to the future viability of Seychelles existing and proposed PAs.

Public and stakeholder awareness could be increased to support the long term objectives of the project

Lessons learned need to be methodically documented by the project going forward and widely shared/ transferred to appropriate parties to support replication and upscaling.

### Institutional Framework and Governance risks to sustainability

There is an element of political uncertainty. The elections in 2015 resulted for the opposition holding the balance in the National Assembly for the first time. While in October 2016, the President stepped down and was replaced by the Vice President, resulting in a call for new elections.

**SNPA transition** is considered to be a risk to the project, especially if the current slow down in implementing SNPA activities continues. However, the NPD stressed at the MTR validation workshop that the government is fully committed to SNPA’s financial autonomy and willing to provide support to ensure that the transition is a smooth one.

**Delays in legislation**. The project is still awaiting the adoption of the Nature Reserves and Conservancy Bill, which was developed in 2012 under the GEF NGO Modality project. This is holding up the project in a number of ways including: (i) A number of prospective PAs are unable to finalize their nomination files and management plans until this Bill is passed, including North Island and Denis Island, which serve as indicator sites for the project[[22]](#footnote-22); (ii) Temporary Protected Areas, Co-management and ‘Sustainable Use’ are dependent on the Bill. The approval process of this legislation is outside of the project’s control.

**Responsiveness to adopt plans**: Project progress is hindered by the responsiveness of the MEECC to ensure that finalized plans, such as the PA Financial plan (completed in 2016) are formally endorsed and adopted by the Government of Seychelles.

### Environmental risks to sustainability:

There is the risk of climate change and potential negative environmental impacts from infrastructural development – cited in the project’s Risk Matrix and considered to be low. The Seychelles relies on high-end international tourism. This is likely to continue to be the mainstay of conservation financing, although this model could be vulnerable to impacts of natural disasters (e.g. tsunamis and climate change in the long run), or a resurgence in piracy.

# Conclusions & Recommendations

## Conclusions

The MTR considered whether it is possible to move towards a systems approach to PA management in the Seychelles and if so the role of the project in creating such a system. Many partners say they want a PA system but there is limited evidence of partners working together to develop a more cohesive system, putting their personal interests aside. A finding of the midterm review is that the PAF should provide on–going support for a move towards a PA system from the perspective of PA financing, but is not designed to, and is not responsible for, developing a PA system plan. The development of a PA system is a broader, longer term endeavor requiring greater Government leadership and commitment by partners and a series of additional activities which are not in the project’s scope. The PAF project should focus on developing financing options at both the site and system level. It can also provide more opportunities to bring partners together to build relationships, manage conflicts and share knowledge. Furthermore, the MSP is already working on the overall PA system framework, for which PAF can best provide technical support.

The project is strategically highly relevant to Seychelles and is well nested within the larger dialogue on PA management and finance through the MSP and SeyCCAT. In additional to its work with SeyCCAT supporting the development of new financing mechanism for the expanded PA System, PAF is supporting a significant amount of work at the institutional level / site specific level focused on PAs in the Inner Islands. It is important that lessons learnt on PA Financing at these sites can be up-scaled to new areas being gazette under the MSP (Figure 3).

**Figure 3: PAF work at Site and System level**

The business case for PAs is lacking and the quantification/ monetization of PA’s contribution to the economy is an important area of work and should be developed. This can help to inform decision and to generally raise awareness of the importance of Natural Capital / Ecosystem Services to the Seychelles.

In terms of project management, the project should not pull back its support to SNPA given the demands currently facing SNPA as it transitions to financial autonomy. Strong ownership of project by SNPA is also very important going forward. It is also important that the NPD champions the project, and expedites the required approvals and government meetings.

The project has the potential to showcase 'best practice' in terms of PAs Finance and Business Planning in the context of SIDS and the Blue Economy. Generally, greater attention is now needed to capture the lessons learnt and disseminate them both internally and externally.

Table 7 presents the MTR Ratings a summary of achievements and challenges. In terms of progress toward results the project is rated as ‘Satisfactory’ across its objectives and its two outcomes. In terms of Project Implementation and adaptive management the project is rated as ‘Moderately Satisfactory’, and ‘Moderately Likely’ in terms of the project’s sustainability.

**Table 7: MTR Ratings & Achievement Summary Table for PA Finance project**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Measure** | **MTR Rating** | **Achievement / Description** |
| **Project Strategy 1** | N/A |  |
| **Progress Towards Results** | Objective: To improve the financial sustainability and strategic cohesion of Seychelles protected area system, which also dealing with emerging threats and risks to biodiversity in the shifting national economic environment.  Achievement Rating: Satisfactory | The mid-term target reached for indicator 1a and for 50% of sub-systems for Indicator 1b, and are on track for indicators 2 and 3, with the End of Project target reached for some indicator components.  The project is producing technically strong outputs and support. |
| Outcome 1: Component 1 Protected Areas investment is fostered & capacity for PA Management, at site and systematic levels, is improved for directing the Long Term sustainable financing of PA  Achievement Rating: Satisfactory | Key achievements include the completion of a Protected Areas System and Financing and Investment Plan, support for the operationalization of SeyCCAT, training for all partners on management and business plans.  The development of Management plans and business plans have faced delays but are now largely progressing.  A decision by the project on how to quantify the contributions of PAs to the economy is required. |
| Outcome 2: The overall ability of the PA system to generate relevant revenue is improved, both in view of improving the overall management effectiveness & of catering for the needs of an expanded estate  Achievement Rating: Satisfactory | Key achievements include the SNPA Strategic plan and financial autonomy, and steady progress across some partner sites (e.g. Aldabra House – Mahe, and Cousin Island).  Delays have been experienced across SNPA activities and by other partners (e.g. SNPA, GIF) for a variety of reasons, some of which are not in the project’s control such as the approval of the Nature Reserves and Conservancy Bill |
| **Project Implementation & Adaptive Management** | Achievement Rating: Moderately Satisfactory | Strong project team.  Areas of improvement include – Government to play more of a role in driving the project, development of Steering Committee to be more pro-active and act for a forum for exchanging knowledge and views and building cohesion, better oversight of co-financing and its links to work-plan, enhance stakeholder engagement and communication. |
| **Sustainability** | Achievement Rating: Moderately Likely | Institutional risks to sustainability include - the Nature Reserves and Conservancy Bill has held the project up on a number of fronts and management of the pressures facing SNPA through its transition. |

Notes: 1/ Strategy is not rated as part of the MTR

## MTR Recommendations

Recommendations, the party responsible for implementing the recommendation and the timeframe within which they should be completed are summarized in Table 8.

**Table 8: MTR Recommendations**

| **Category** | **Specific Recommendations** | **Responsible party** | **Completion date [Timeframe]** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **1/ Revisions to Results Matrix** | * North Island and Denis Island to be removed as indicator sites, as they are not protected areas and are unlikely to be designated within the time frame of the project. This does not affect the project support under component 2 for these sites. | PM | September 2018 |
| * Indicator 9c – to be revised to reflect the best current opportunities in innovative financing for PAs. The project should realign its activities under this indicator to supporting SeyCCAT to develop their Blue Enterprise Fund and Tourism Conservation Levy. It should however continue to monitor options for PES and Biodiversity Offsets and support their development if the opportunity arises. The End of Project target can be revised to: At least 1 mechanism trailed, most likely Blue Enterprise Fund or Tourism Conservation Levy. | PM | September 2018 |
| * Glass bottom boat at SNPA sites (Activity 2.2.8) to be dropped and funds reallocated to other SNPA activities. | PM | September 2018 |
| * **Capacity Scorecards** – Measurement of progress against indicator 6 is problematic as the baseline was only established for SNPA, ICS and the PCU at project design. Furthermore, assessments by other projects (namely the Outer Islands project in November 2016, and the planned capacity assessments under the proposed R2R project (GEF6) indicate that an additional assessment by PAF is not needed at this stage. It is recommended that the project undertakes an assessment for ICS and SNPA, which can act as indicators for capacity building, with particular emphasis on SNPA to help inform capacity development for the Terminal Evaluation. | PAF | In advance of the Terminal Evaluation |
| **2/ Silhouette (activity 2.2.8) -** concrete progress is required within the current quarter (July- September 2018) or funds shall be reallocated by the project. | The revised **project proposal** which satisfies the objectives of the project, adopted by the Silhouette Foundation by the end of August 2018. This should include a commitment to update the existing terrestrial management plan, recently finalized by ICS, to include the marine national park, which will enable Silhouette Island to be managed as one integrated site with associated revenue sharing arrangements. | SNPA-ICS, Silhouette  Foundation, | August 2018 |
| Detailed work plan and budget submitted and approved to the Project Steering Committee by end of September 2018. | As above | September 2018. |
| Updated integrated management plan with a fully costed implementation plan completed by December 2018. | As above | December 2018 |
| Sustainable financing plan for the integrated management of both the terrestrial and marine national parks developed and formally adopted by the Silhouette Foundation by April 2019. | As above | April 2019 |
| * MEECC to develop the regulations for Silhouette National Park (including both the marine and terrestrial national parks in an integrated regulation). | MEECC | October 2018 |
| * Progress as per the work-plan to be assessed by PAF at the end of September 2018 and again at the end of December 2018, with the view of reducing or removing the grant allocation if adequate progress has not been made | PAF | [Ongoing] |
| **3/ Decision on activity 1.2.2** – Quantification of the contribution of the PA system to the economy of Seychelles | * NPD to facilitate a decision between PAF, Government and Steering Committee on the way forward. PAF can support the TEMPA study (if approved by Government), or additional money could be allocated to support the SWIOFISH3 consultancy on ecosystem services. | NPD | October 2018 |
| 4/ **Project Management** | * PAF project manager / PCU to resolve issues around **project co-financing**: (i) determine how much support will be forthcoming over the remaining project period and how this can best support the work-plan, with a focus on partners for whom contributions are significantly below commitments at the mid term (i.e. Denis Private Island, MEEC, Nature Seychelles, SNPA) ; (ii) Work with MEECC and SeyCATT to quantify of current and future co-financing by MEECC. | PAF, MEECC, NS, SNPA, SeyCATT | October  2018 |
| * The **TA position** is scheduled to end in December 2019 – work-plans / priorities going forward need to take this into account to ensure that the TA’s time is strategically allocated, and that the work can be completed within the timeframe and /or sustained by others. | PAF | December 2018 |
| * A review of all activities in Q1 2019 should determine if there is scope in the budget (due to underspending, or under performing activities which may be curtailed) to extend the Technical Advisor position beyond December 2019, if the Steering Committee are in support of this. | PAF, SC | June 2019 |
| * All partners to detail their workplans / programmes as requested by PAF PM (e.g. provision of details on sub-activities and allocated budgets, especially where there is a deviation from the annual workplans) so that it is clear what money is being spent on. | All partners, PM | [On-going] |
| * PAF and Denis Island to arrange a first visit by PAF to see project opportunities at site level. | PAF-PM- GIF-Dennis Island | October 2018 |
|  | * **Branding**. All partners to ensure that they acknowledge GEF Funding in their promotional materials as per GEF branding guidelines. | PAF with all Partners | [Immediate and ongoing] |
| **5/ NPD / MEECC to champion project** | NPD to be responsible for the approval and adoption of the Protected Area Finance Plan, a key output for the project, through liaising with the MOF and Cabinet. | NPD | October 2018 |
| A meeting with the new Minister of Environment to present the project, MTR results and future activities is a priority | NPD | September 2018 |
| Ensure National Reserves and Conservancy Act is approved | MEECC | December 2018 |
| Ensure technical outputs by the project are adopted by Government and championed/publicized by MEECC | MEECC | [Ongoing] |
| **6/ Support for SNPA delivery**: | * + PAF and SNPA to specify the delivery mechanisms for project activities by the end of September 2018. This should clearly identify the focal point for the PAF project and leads for specific activities as appropriate | SNPA & PAF | September 2018 |
| The following quality assurance process for SNPA signage and information is recommended: (i) All printed outputs to be reviewed by the SNPA Technical Advisory Committee; (ii) Printing of all outputs being paid by the project must receive formal approval from PM and TA *before* they are printed. | SNPA, SNPA Technical Advisory Committee, PAF | [Ongoing] |
| * + It is recommended that a manager is hired using SNPA’s allocated grant funding to ensure the timely delivery of SNPA project activities under component 2. This is based on the view that SNPA are not currently resourced to manage the activities in-house, and further delays have cost implications and increase the risk of activities not being finalized within the project timeframe to the required level of quality. The appointed person should work with the new SNPA maintenance officer to help build their capacity, but should not be involved in SNPA activities not funded by the PAF. | SNPA & PAF | Urgent. End of October 2018 at the latest |
| * + PAF to fund a legal and institutional expert to support SNPA in its negotiations with the Government regarding its transition to an autonomous body in January 2019. SNPA does not have a legal officer and it urgently needs legal advice. | PAF | Urgent. End of September 2018 at the latest |
| * + PAF to present regularly to the SNPA board, which meets every 2 months, to facilitate discussions on issues to be resolved by the project and their timely resolution. PAF Quarterly Progress reports to be brought to the attention of SNPA Board if activities not are on track, or in advance of such reports if needed. | PAF & SNPA | On-going – End of project |
| * + SNPA to develop a plan for increasing its human resource capacity, and to consider hiring staff on a contract basis in the near team to attract the right candidates for senior and mid-manager positions. | SNPA | December 2018 |
| **7/ PAF to focus on supporting development of a PA System through its development of PA sustainable financing mechanisms** | * PAF to facilitate sharing of results between partners, and discussions on how their activities [supported by project] can contribute to financing PA system | PAF | [On-going ] |
| * PAF to continue to work with SeyCCAT to help build its asset base and address funding gaps and system level financing solutions, and with MSP, e.g. through support on the costing of the MSP | PAF - SeyCATT | [Ongoing] |
| 8/ **Building cohesion between project partners** | * PAF training to continue to be used as a mechanism to bring parties together. | PAF - Partners | On-going |
| * Steering Committee Meetings can be restructured to allow a session each meeting on a specific theme/topic of common interest to PAs | SC | [On-going] |
| * The SNPA Marketing and Communication Strategy and related training (for all partners) should be seen by all partners as an opportunity to work together and develop common marketing materials. | PAF - Partners | December 2018 |
| **9/ Build closer working relationship with ETF** | * PAF to meet regularly with ETF and SeyCCAT to keep each other abreast of their funding proposals to maximize effectiveness of funding and avoid duplication. | PAF-ETF-SeyCATT | [Ongoing] |
| * ETF to be invited to join PAF SC | SC | To be decided at next SC |
| **10/ Communications / Knowledge sharing.** | * PAF to document **lessons learnt** from the implementation of project activities, with clear guidance on how piloted activities may be up-scaled to other sites / Outer Islands. These lessons could be developed together with OI Project, to demonstrate linkages, for example in relation to the business plans being developed under the OI project. | PAF-TA, with support from partners | December 2019 |
| * For each finance mechanism piloted or under design/consideration by the project an overview **policy note** (or alternative dissemination document) should be developed that sets out the main features of the mechanism, their strengths and weaknesses, lessons learnt, where and how it can be applied in the Seychelles (e.g. site or system level or both) and conditions required for the mechanism to be successfully implemented. This should be done in close collaboration with the NPD and shared with the MOF. | PAF-TA, with support of project partners | December 2019 |
| * A **compendium of PA financing mechanisms** applicable to Seychelles with links to technical documents and best practices globally may also be developed. This information may also be used to update the Protected Area Finance Plan towards the end of the project. The compendium could be linked to a national PA financing **knowledge database** which potentially could be developed and made accessible to different stakeholder groups to support decision-making and consistent adoption of best practice. Ideally this database would be updated and maintained post the project, if a suitable host could be identified. | PAF-TA, with support from partners | December 2019 |
| * PCU and UNDP to agree if the database of terrestrial and marine Business Plans from around the world, already collated by the PAF and currently available in a dropbox, could be hosted on the BesNET or Conservation Finance Alliance website to increase their visibility. | PAF, RTA | December 2018 |
| * **Dissemination**: Photo essays and easily digestible and readable articles in multiple languages would help to disseminate and publicize project messages and achievements, nationally and internationally, in the public eye and within the international development community. Increased use of social/mass media can be considered to enhance visibility. The opportunity exists to engage with experienced journalists/communications experts at UNDP HQ to develop a suite of products. | PAF | [Ongoing] |
| **11/ Strengthen partnerships with the Minister of Tourism.** | * PAF to aim to develop a closer working relationship with the MOT to derive mutually beneficial PA tourism initiatives. Development of tourism in PAs helps to meet an objective of the Minister of Tourism to diversify the tourism offering in Seychelles and of PAF to increase PA tourism related revenues which can then be reinvested into conservation. The fact that the Minister of Tourism, as the previous Minister MEECC, is familiar with the project, supports this partnership. | PAF - MOT | September 2018 and on-going |
| **12/Enhanced engagement with the private sector** | * In particular, the tourism sector (i.e. island resorts and local businesses), whose collaboration on PA financing (in terms of financial contributions and marketing of PAs) is expected to become more important as the PA system expands. This includes continuing to work with SNPA on hotel contributions and exploring new opportunities to work with the private sector (perhaps in collaboration with the MOT). | PAF | On-going to end of project |

# Annexes

*Provided as separate documents*

## MTR ToR (excluding ToR annexes)

## MTR evaluative matrix

## Progress towards Results Matrix

## Review of progress at Activity Level

## Overview of partners

## Ratings Scales

## MTR mission itinerary, list of persons interviewed, workshop agenda and attendees

## List of documents reviewed

## Signed UNEG Code of Conduct form

## Signed MTR final report clearance form

1. . Seychelles has committed to protect 30% of its marine waters and to develop a marine spatial plan to ensure representative species and habitats have long-term protection, improve resiliency of coastal ecosystems in the context of a changing climate, and ensure economic opportunities for fisheries, tourism and other uses.  ([www.seymsp.com](http://www.seymsp.com) accessed 12 July 2018).SNPA sharing exoeriences. Using the same developer for te same systems.activitysis anad monitoring. SNPA interested in expl [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. These are: (i) 74,400 square kilometres of waters surrounding the isolated Aldabra Atoll, a UNESCO World Heritage Site; and (ii)136,000 square kilometers of a commercially important stretch of ocean between the Amirantes group of coral islands and Fortune Bank. ([www.seymsp.com](http://www.seymsp.com) accessed 12 July 2018). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/seychelles/overview>, accessed 9 July 2018 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. In terms of terrestrial PA coverage, Seychelles has one of the highest ratios in the world, with 47% of its total land reserved for protected areas (i.e. 209 km²). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. http://www.uncsd2012.org [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Section based on the Project Document [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. The PCU also oversees an Adaptation Fund Project [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. President Danny Faure attended a roundtable of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) at the G7 summit in Quebec, Canada, where he talked about Seychelles’ Blue Economy roadmap and Marine Spatial Plan stating ‘Our ocean is our pathway to prosperity.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Seychelles Blue Economy Strategic Framework and Roadmap (the Blue Economy Roadmap), was approved by the Government of Seychelles in January 2018. It is an integrated approach to ocean based sustainable development which brings together economy, environment and society, consistent with the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030 (SDG’s), Aichi Target 11 of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change (2015). [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Drawing on key principles from the CBD’s Programme of Work on Protected Areas (www.cbd.int/powpa) [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. One ‘high-revenue’ site can earn up to $26,000/km2/year while other sites, such as those managed by the Department of Environment, are ‘financial sinks’ with no prospect of ever earning revenue. Yet their maintenance and protection from poaching is essential for the conservation of rare endemic birds and other species. Tablse x and x out design.,novative finacing since project deign, , Thees relate to the proposed ecards ve pratcices,tor is bei [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. For example through the establishment and running of a SeyCCAT office  
     and support to the SeyCCAT Board, meetings and trainings [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. The proportion of women at project workshops and trainings are: PA Finance Plan kick-off workshop - 57%; PA Finance Plan validation workshop - 51%; Management plan training workshop- 27%. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. OIPis supporting the development of Business plans for Desroches, Alphonse, Poivre and Farquhar to be finalized in early 2019. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. The current paper based system is inefficient and results in considerable leakage of payments (estimated at around 50% due to avoidance and / or collusion between boat officers and rangers). It is currently the responsibility of the ranger to seek out boats and ask for payment. The on-line system will also therefore considerably free up staff time for other conservation activities. organisationsdiffrent roject (drafted June 2018, but yet to be formally agreed) is to pilot and test a collborative [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. To date SNPA negotiated individually with tour operators, with the result that some hotels paid the required fees, while others avoided it. There is thus a need to design and enforce a systematic and fair system with the hotels. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Co-mangement arrangements need the approval of the The Natural Reserves and Conservancy Bill [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Funds maybe redirected under Outer Island Project to fund a step by step enforcement manual instead of a training. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. The project has collaborated with BIOFIN in a number of ways. For example, PAF participated in a BIOFIN conference call on Biodiversity Offsets on 14th November 2016, has shared project documents, attended BIOFIN workshop in December 2017, and presented at the BIOFIN regional meeting in June 2018. However, the two initiatives, which in principal are closely aligned, have not combined their efforts on financing mechanism to the extent that some consultees hoped they might. As noted in the PAF progress reports – ‘BIOFIN has embarked on activities targeting the tourism industry which are not necessarily aligned with the carefully discussed prior initiatives of the project’. BIOFIN are also working on Biosecurity fees from imported goods which are not directly related to the financing of PAs. BIOFIN activities in Seychelles will finish at the end of 2018. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. The GEF NGO PA project set up a server and a committee to share information which did not work, while a website with links to all other PA agencies was not supported by the PAs. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. <http://www.besnet.world/about> [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. A number of Outer Island project sites are also affected. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)